THE LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED.

BY

EDWARD SEARCH, Esq;

VOLUME III. PART II.

Lights of NATURE and GOSPEL blended.

The Christian Religion is, in all its Parts, adapted to the present Nature and Circumstances of Mankind; and it is not possible to see the Reasonableness and Beauty of the Gospel, without considering the Condition and Quality of those for whose Use and Benefit it is designed.

Bp Sherlock, Vol. IV. p. 100.

The Posthumous WORK of

ABRAHAM TUCKER, Esq.

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M DCC LXXVII.

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THE

LIGHT OF NATURE

PURSUED.

VOL. IV. PART II.

CHAP. X.

Things above Reaſon.

AS hard as I have been upon vanity in all its branches throughout the preceding pages, I am far from condemning a juſt regard to reputation: for this will prove a ſanction to a man's own judgement of that rectitude which he makes the rule of his conduct, and gain him that willingneſs to receive his aſſiſtance without which his labours can be of very little benefit to any body beſides himſelf. Therefore before I proceed further, I muſt guard againſt what is moſt apt to do injury to the credit of a work, the expectation of greater matters to be contained in it than were intended. If the Reader be kindly diſpoſed, he will reduce his expectations ſo low, as but juſt enough to leave him a curioſity of liſtening to me: ſhould he after-

wards by great chance find more than he expected, the diſappointment will hurt neither of us; whereas a diſappointment the contrary way might do him a diſpleaſure, and me a diſcredit, we do not either of us deſerve.

Perhaps it might be imagined from ſome former paſſages and from the great preparations made to fit myſelf for ſuch an enterprize, that I am going to make a perfect reconcilement between revealed Religion and natural, in all their branches. I ſhould be glad to do ſo much, and I believe it poſſible to be done, provided both be taken in their genuine purity, ſtripped of all the diſguiſements, and foreign mixtures caſt upon them by unwary or ill-deſigning perſons: but the taſk exceeds my ſkill and abilities. However I mean to do the beſt I can towards it, which yet I did not think myſelf likely to do without cautious preparation. So my own abilities muſt be the ſcanty limits to determine the choice of my ſubjects: I ſhall take ſuch only in hand upon which I ſeem likely to offer ſomething pertinent to the main purpoſe, leaving all the reſt to more maſterly performers: well ſatisfied if I can effect the reconcilement in ſome few points where it has been commonly thought deſperate, and not without hopes of doing ſomething that way which may encourage abler workmen to make larger advances upon the ſame deſign. This attempt I have all along had in view from the very firſt, and have

dropped

dropped a hint of it in § 57. of the Viſion under figure of Gellius's interlineations, the traces whereof I am now beginning to recover.

I muſt deſire likewiſe it may be remembered that my courſe has lain all along within the precincts of human reaſon, nor do I mean to paſs the barriers now, for fear of wandering out of my knowledge: therefore ſhall not meddle with the external evidences, as belonging to another ſcience I am not verſed in. There are able champions enough among the divines to handle theſe weapons, to examine their juſt weight, to poize and point them rightly againſt the gainſayer: too many to need my feeble aſſiſtance, who might only ſtand in their way by my unſkilful management. So I ſhall confine myſelf to ſuch of the doctrines and duties on both ſides whereof I can find a natural unforced explanation which may render them compatible, or ſometimes corroborative of one another, ſo that inſtead of being detached ſeemingly diſcordant tenets, they may grow into one compact body, having a connection and vital circulation running throughout the whole.

2. The firſt object moſt expedient to begin our trial upon ſeems to be the aſcertaining the proper province and juriſdiction of Reaſon; for here the parties uſually become litigants on ſetting out: and till they can be brought to ſome agreement upon this point there is little hopes of travelling amicably in any other part

of their journey. The Believer is perpetually warning men to beware of reaſon as a blind fallacious guide, exhorting them to ſubmit their reaſon to faith, to believe things their underſtanding cannot fathom: nay ſome have gone ſo far as to inſiſt that we ſee all things in God by the eye of faith, and that our natural faculties diſcover nothing to us with a certainty to be depended upon. The Rationaliſt will admit nothing of all this, for he maintains that reaſon is the only faculty we have to help ourſelves with, therefore if we diſcard this guide, we muſt grope in the dark without any guide at all: nay inſiſts, that no man can help following it whatever he may fancy to the contrary, for whoever takes things upon the credit of another does it upon conviction of the other's knowledge and veracity, without which he would not heed him. Thus far we muſt acknowledge him in the right, and ſo he poſſibly may be without his antagoniſt being altogether in the wrong, if the latter have a different idea of reaſon: for while there remains a variance in this particular not taken notice of, they will only play at croſs purpoſes, and may diſpute for ever without any effect: therefore it ſeems adviſeable to endeavour ſettling clearly what are our ideas of reaſon, before we go on to conſider what it will do.

Reaſon in its fulleſt extent, comprehends every inlet whereby light can break in upon us, the

the judgement of the ſenſes, the learning received by inſtruction, inveſtigations of our underſtanding, and the concluſions left in our mind thereby: and is ſynonymous with ſenſe or diſcernment, by which we eſtimate the reality of any appearance or truth of any propoſition ſuggeſted. In this comprehenſive latitude it muſt be taken when we pronounce it the ſole faculty we have to help ourſelves with, which were not true if ſpoken of any particular means of knowledge excluſive of the reſt. But we often diſtinguiſh between reaſon and appearance, reaſon and information, reaſon and experience, reaſon and authority, which are conſidered as ſo many diſtinct ſources from whence knowledge may be derived; for what we are told and what we have ſeen we do not diſcover by reaſon, which need only be employed when other means are wanting or unſatisfactory: and in ſome ſuch reſtrained ſenſe the term muſt be underſtood by whoever talks of ſubmitting reaſon to another guide.

But I cannot help obſerving, there ſeems a little inconſiſtency in the procedure of both parties: for the man who would purſue another to give up his reaſon plies him with arguments to enforce his miracles, prophecies, and other evidences, wherein he appeals to that very reaſon he ſo totally decries. On the other hand, he that inſiſts upon reaſon being the ſole faculty, which no man can help following if he

would, has no ground to charge another with caſting aſide his reaſon, which is not poſſible for him to do: for the Spaniſh villager ſees no reaſon to diſtruſt his confeſſor in any thing told him, ſo follows the faculty he has as ſteadily as the moſt enlightened freethinker.

3. Therefore reaſon, to be made the ſubject of a diſpute, muſt import ſomething that is not the ſole principle of aſſent, but capable of being deſerted for ſome other guidance, and we muſt ſeek for ſome more determinate idea of it than is ordinarily to be found among diſputants. And if we attend to the language of mankind, I think it will be found, that reaſon denotes that ſet of principles or judgements ſtored in the mind from experience or other ſources: for when we ſay a thing ſtands to reaſon, or is diſcordant from it, we mean thereby that it coincides or diſagrees with the notions we have already entertained. Now were we maſters of mathematical certainty, our preſent judgements would be an infallible teſt to try all other evidences by, according as we perceived them repugnant or reconcileable thereto: but this not being the caſe, it would be the moſt unreaſonable thing in the world to reſolve againſt ever departing from our preſent judgement upon any evidence whatever, or to do it unleſs the new evidence overbalance the old.

Thus far we may go without offence to either ſide, but ſubmitting implies ſomething more than

than barely balancing the evidences, it carries the idea of a voluntary act to take off weight from the ſcale of preſent opinion: and when we reflect how often prejudice and paſſion ſlip into the balance, we ſhall ſee the expedience of ſubmitting our reaſon by ſedulouſly lifting out the weights they have caſt in. On the other hand, if another would throw his prejudices and paſſions into the oppoſite ſcale, there is as much expedience in reſiſting, as there was in ſubmitting in the former caſe. I ſhall not enter into the conteſts concerning the ſide whereon the prejudice lies: each opponent conſtantly charging it upon the other; it is enough to warn both againſt the danger and unreaſonableneſs of reſolving either to exact or refuſe ſubmiſſion at all hazards; let them uſe their beſt induſtry to find out the proper times for either.

But it is ſaid there are ſome principles ſo ſtrongly confirmed by conſtant experience, that though they have not mathematical certainty, they carry ſo full a degree of aſſurance, as no weight of teſtimony or other ſubſequent evidence can overbalance without aid of violent prejudice or paſſion, which is the circumſtance making reſiſtance expedient. Now I cannot eaſily admit that we may be ſo well aſſured of any principle as to render it abſolutely impoſſible there ſhould be any new evidence ſtrong enough to overthrow it upon a diſpaſſionate examination,

tion. We know for once this rule failed, when the Indian king diſcredited all the Dutchman had ſaid before, upon hearing him aſſert, that in Holland the cold was ſo intenſe as to make the water hard enough to walk upon: for we can ſcarce be better aſſured of any thing than he was that if a greater degree of cold could make water hard, a leſs degree muſt proportionably ſtiffen and approach it towards hardneſs, which was contrary to conſtant experience.

But then as in the preſent diſputes there is no room to expect ſuch extraordinary evidence as may deſerve the preference to all our old ſtores, but they are carried on by reaſonings of man with man, upon the foundations lying open in common to all; I ſee no cauſe to admit exceptions againſt this rule, nor expedience even of liſtening to the proofs offered by a fellow-creature in ſupport of a point directly counter to the cleareſt beſt-eſtabliſhed principles of reaſon, unleſs by an experimental application he can produce the teſtimony of our own ſenſes. If a man told me he drank out a bottle yeſterday after dinner, I might take him at his word, becauſe I ſee nothing in my ideas to hinder that he might do it: but if he added, that as ſoon as he had drank out the wine, he crept into the bottle himſelf, this appears ſo diſcordant to my cleareſt conceptions, that I ſhould deem it ſuperfluous

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to let him call for witneſſes to atteſt the fact, or enter into a long argumentation to prove the poſſibility of it. I ſhould cut the matter ſhort by deſiring him to ſend for the bottle, and if he would let me ſee him creep in again, I would engage to believe he had done it yeſterday.

But the misfortune is, we are apt to miſtake the extent of our rule by miſtaking that of our reaſon: the ſtrong glare of our cleareſt evidences makes them ſeem to cover more ground than they really do, by which means we are led ſometimes to imagine them contradicted in matters whereof they are wholly ſilent. Hence comes the diſtinction between things contrary to reaſon, and things above reaſon, that is beyond the limits of its reach. For ſure none will be ſo hardy as to require aſſent againſt reaſon in points whereof the party ſtands in a ſituation to judge for himſelf: nor will any avow his reſolution to refuſe all other evidences, when he has no rational grounds from his own fund to determine either way. But the great difficulty lies in aſcertaining what is above, and what contrary to reaſon: there are perpetual diſputes upon this article, ſome looking upon their non-comprehenſion as a certain mark of the contrariety, while others would impoſe the moſt palpable abſurdities under the notion of their being above reaſon. The vulgar are generally too credulous, becauſe their reaſon being narrow,

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there is little room to contradict it: and the learned too indocible, becauſe having extended theirs to a larger field, they think every thing a contradiction that will not come within the ſphere.

I have heard it remarked that parſons and lawyers are the moſt troubleſome people in the world for one another to deal with, for being uſed to augmentation and rejoining, they will take nothing upon truſt without having it explained to their ſatisfaction; one will receive none of your creeds upon the authority of the Church, unleſs you trace out to him every link of the connection between ſpeculative points, and the happineſs of mankind; the other expects you to ſhow what foundation there is in juſtice, that if a man has ever ſo good a cauſe and ſets it out ever ſo clearly in his plea, yet if he happens to demur by averment, when he ſhould have concluded to the contrary, judgement ſhall go againſt him. And if they acquieſce in theſe things for peace ſake, yet they look upon them as empty forms of no real uſe, impoſed only to amuſe the vulgar, and give an importance to the perſons ſkilled in them. But in all trades, profeſſions, arts and ſciences whatſoever, there is ſomething of myſtery underſtood by the reſpective profeſſor, and clearly diſcerned neceſſary for his practice, but extremely hard to be made out plain enough to ſatisfy the reaſon of a ſtranger.

I ſhall

I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe the certain mark by which things above reaſon may be diſtinguiſhed from things contrary to reaſon, as being more than I can undertake: this is beſt learned by that moſt uſeful knowledge I have recommended more than once before under the appellation of the ſcience of ignorance. That there muſt be a difference, ſtands to reaſon itſelf, which can paſs no judgement concerning things above it, therefore they can have no contrariety to it, for a witneſs cannot eaſily be contradicted in points whereon he depoſes nothing: it belongs to reaſon to judge of the external evidence offered in ſupport of them, but would be a contradiction in terms to ſuppoſe reaſon capable of pronouncing upon a previous contemplation of their nature. But how much ſoever men acknowledge in general the limited condition of their underſtanding, this is but a profeſſion in form to gain the credit of modeſty, or rather they think themſelves ſenſible of the limitation when they really are not: for you ſeldom find them ſenſible of it in particular inſtances. They will readily enough admit an ignorance of external objects, becauſe this may proceed from want of neceſſary information, and caſts no ſlur upon their capacity: but are wonderfully backward to acknowledge it in their ideas of reflection; for fear this might leſſen them in their own opinion by ſhewing a want of ſtrength in their faculties.

5. Nevertheleſs

5. Nevertheleſs whoever will take the pains to reflect, may find inſtances of events whoſe reality he cannot doubt of, though the manner of their production be beyond all poſſibility of conception. We know that if two bodies lie cloſe together, by puſhing one you may move both, yet it is not to be conceived how the hindmoſt can move before the other is gone away to leave a ſpace for it to move into, nor how the foremoſt can move before there is any motion in the other to impel it. Therefore ſome who were unwilling to allow any thing above their reaſon denied the reality of all motion whatever: ſo that one may ſucceſſively ſee Paris, London, and Edinburgh, without ſtirring an inch from one's place. We move our limbs with perfect command and expertneſs, without knowing any circumſtance concerning the little fibres whereby we move them, how many they be, where they lie, or which of them belongs to each particular member. This is ſo inconceiveable, that Hartley denied we ever move them at all, but that they are worked for us by the vibratiuncles of ether. We continually experience perceptions excited in our minds by the action of bodies upon our ſenſes, yet there is no conceiving any relation between impulſe and thought, nor what connection the modifications of body can have with the perceptions of ſpirit. Therefore Berkley denied the exiſtence of bodies, and that perception could be excited by

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any thing leſs than an immediate act of Omnipotence. The pulſation of the heart, the working of the lungs, the tone of circulating veſſels in plants and animals, the powers of elaſticity and electricity, the action of fire, the prodigious exploſion of gunpowder, are things inconceiveable in their cauſes and manner of operation.

Theſe then are all above reaſon, and if we become infidels to every thing that is ſo, we ſhall loſe the uſe of our ſenſes, and ſtrip ourſelves of all knowledge and grounds of aſſurance of any kind whatever. We ſhould attain a freedom of thought indeed with a witneſs, but ſuch a freedom as a man would enjoy who ſhould be carried up into the intermundane ſpaces beyond the reach of all attraction: he would have no force nor reſtraint upon him, it is true, but at the ſame time he would have no power of motion, for he could neither walk, nor ſwim, nor fly. The diviſibility of matter is above our reaſon, whether you ſuppoſe it endleſs or limit it by the doctrine of atoms: yet how confidently have many maintained the oppoſite ſides of the queſtion. Mr Locke has ſhown us what one might wonder we ſhould need ſhowing, for one would think every body ſhould know his own ideas without being told, but he has ſhown us that we have no idea of any thing infinite: therefore all infinities are incomprehenſible, but who would make this a reaſon for diſbelieving

ing their reality? The moſt extravagant zealots for reaſon hold the exiſtence of infinite ſpace. Epicurus and Lucretius, who cannot be ſuſpected of vulgar credulity, maintained the infinitude of atoms, and that infinite combinations were formed of them: nay further that there are innumerable Earths wherein the very ſame tranſactions are paſſing as in this, champions of liberty railing in North-britons, verſifiers ſquirting out cateleſs rhapſodies of harmonious billingſgate, and ſearchers puzzling their brains upon old exploded queſtions which nobody cares a pin how decided, as being of no conſequence either for raiſing a fortune, or making a figure in the Houſe of Commons, or ſhining in polite company.

Thus we ſee how all are driven by the teſtimony of their ſenſes and exerciſes of their reaſon, in whatever various manner performed, to admit the reality of ſome things inexplicable, and conſequently above reaſon as lying beyond the reach of our conception. And if viſible nature be ſo replete with myſteries, we muſt expect to find them in contemplations on the ſupreme Being, in whom every thing is infinite, every thing incomprehenſible: of whoſe acts we have no experience nor teſtimony of our ſenſes, but can only catch an imperfect glimpſe by their remote conſequences in his works. We have no clear idea of creation, nor the paſſage from non-entity into exiſtence and perſonality

becauſe

becauſe all productions we know of were made of pre-exiſtent materials; yet moſt of us are convinced the Beings we ſee muſt have been created. We have no adequate notion of neceſſary exiſtenee, yet are all perſuaded to a man it muſt belong ſomewhere, the ſole queſtion remaining, whether to one object, or multitudes. We cannot conceive a pure act determined originally by the agent without ſome foreign influence: for the acts of bodies proceed neceſſarily from external impulſe, and our own determinately from previous lights and motives: yet we cannot fail of ſeeing, the Firſt Cauſe muſt have acted before there was any thing prior to give an influence, or ſtand as the object of intelligence; nor could he have had intelligence ſuch in kind as ours within himſelf, for that would be making him conſiſt of parts; one to be diſcerned, the other to diſcern, and this paſſively, becauſe in all diſcernment we know of, the mind receives involuntarily the action of ſomething elſe upon it. We can conceive Time and Space neither dependent nor independent on the almighty Will and pleaſure; for if we take the former, then, if it ſhould ſo pleaſe God, there might be a time wherein there would be no time, and he himſelf might exiſt no where yet without ceaſing to be, which ſeem to carry a contradiction in the terms: if the latter, then were time and ſpace ſelf-exiſtencies, co-eternal with God him-

ſelf, neceſſary aſſiſtants in his work of creation, by furniſhing room without which he could not have ſpread forth his worlds, and ſcope without which his order of ſucceſſion and courſes of Providence could not have taken effect. Yet who of us doubts the reality of time and ſpace, or that God had the fountain of all created Being ſolely in himſelf, without being beholden to any thing external for making his gracious intentions practicable?

The averſion againſt admitting any thing above reaſon, which nevertheleſs we have ſeen it is impoſſible to avoid, has been the fatal eddy drawing men into atheiſm: for becauſe they could not conceive a ſubſtance which could neither be felt, nor ſeen, nor apprehended by any other avenue of ſenſation, they denied the exiſtence of ſpirit; becauſe they could not apprehend the manner of creation, they maintained the eternal ſelf-exiſtency of matter: never conſidering that their dread of credulity drove them upon points more inadmiſſible than any they rejected. For if we have any ſphere of reaſon, it muſt include the properties of bodies wherewith we are daily converſant: but our experience of what may be done by various affortments of them, will not ſuffer us to imagine that any combination of them can form a perceptive Being. We know that vaſt quantities of motion are continually loſt by colliſion and preſſure, which matter can never recruit, having

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none other activity than what it derives from impulſe of things external: we know the action of all ſubſtances within our notice depends upon certain adequate cauſes, that their difference of primary properties, their number or proportion to the ſpace they float in, muſt have had a cauſe to determine them, therefore there muſt have been ſomething prior to their operation and exiſtence. All theſe things are not above reaſon, our notions of them being grounded on experience, therefore whatever reaſon diſapproves concerning them, we muſt pronounce contrary to it.

But when we go to dive into the original cauſes, we may expect before hand to find them above our reaſon: for of theſe we have no experience nor other knowledge of their powers, than may be gathered from conſideration of what their effects muſt neceſſarily require. So that when any thing appears hard of conception, if we examine what there is ſimilar within our experience to form a conception by, this will be the moſt likely method to diſcover whether it be above or contrary to reaſon: for it is one thing to find nothing like what is propoſed in all our ſtores of experience, another to find them diſcordant to it; the one is only a negative evidence, the other a poſitive, which prevails over the former in all courts of judicature.

I have ſuggeſted theſe conſiderations in order to recommend the examination of our faculties together with the grounds they have to proceed upon, before we go on to examine other objects by them; and prevail on men to make a difference between not underſtanding how a thing can be, and underſtanding clearly that it cannot be, which I conceive would help greatly towards preventing haſty determinations and groundleſs confidences in many common affairs, but more eſpecially in the contemplation of things inviſible. Not that I have any particular end to ſerve by getting ſuch perſuaſion to prevail, for I have neither pretence nor deſign to impoſe things hard of digeſtion: I have addreſſed all along to reaſon, endeavouring to make every thing as clear as the ſubject would permit by examples, illuſtrations and explanations, and deſiring nobody to adopt any of my notions further than he can enter into the reaſons on which I preſent them. And I am ſo far from intending to depart from this method, that it will be the principal aim of my future progreſs to apply what I have hitherto collected for explaining difficulties, and bringing down if poſſible ſome matters ordinarily eſteemed above reaſon to lie within its compaſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Miracles.

AFTER the declaration made in the beginning of the laſt Chapter againſt meddling with external proofs, nobody can expect me to enter upon the authenticity of any particular miracle: no more falls within my province than to examine the credibility of miracles in general, and whether all proofs offered in ſupport of them ought to be rejected without hearing, as an abſurdity ſo abhorrent to reaſon, that no weight of evidence whatever can overbalance. I ſhall have no occaſion here to diſtinguiſh, as is frequently done and frequently diſregarded, between immediate acts of the Almighty and ſupernatural effects produced by ſubordinate powers, ſuppoſed to interfere in the operations of natural cauſes: becauſe I do not recollect any objections lying againſt the credibility of one, that do not lie equally againſt the other. For that of the divine dominion not ſuffering the creatures to interfere, is rather an argument of the external kind, than of the intrinſic impoſſibility of their ſo doing.

It has been ſaid that experience being the groundwork of all our knowledge, nothing ought to be admitted which is not ſupported by

that: but let it be remembered that experience itſelf had a beginning, all things we can reckon among its ſtores were once new; therefore if nothing unſupported by it were to gain our aſſent, we ſhould never have any experience at all. Or if it be allowed from the neceſſity of the caſe, to receive new acquiſitions until we have gotten a competent ſtock and no longer, when are we to fix the time of having gained this competent ſtock? for children at ſeven years old have ſome experience, and a man at ſixty may have diſcoveries offered him out of all the courſe of his former experience. Well, but we muſt not take Experience too ſtrictly, perhaps by Supporting may be meant Not-oppoſing: ſo that I may receive information of new matters whereof my former experience is totally ſilent, but nothing that contradicts the teſtimony I have received from that. I ſhall not take pains to prove that properly ſpeaking, no new event contradicts experience, which depoſes only concerning things paſt: that having been already done in a better manner than I can mend by Mr Adams in his little treatiſe upon this article, though poſſibly ſomething of what I ſhall offer may have ariſen from hints ſuggeſted there. But whether with ſtrict propriety or no, certain it is we do talk of things contradicting experience; when we conceive it to have been ſo full as to give us a thorough knowledge of

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the ſubject in queſtion, whatever is offered concerning it that will not co-incide with that, we term contrary to experience.

Nevertheleſs experience itſelf will teſtify that ſuch contrariety is not ſo invincible a bar, but that conviction can ſometimes force a way in ſpite of it. Equivocal generation was formerly the orthodox opinion founded on conſtant experience, by which men knew it was the nature of duſt and putrefaction to breed vermin: but now univerſally exploded. It was holden to be againſt experience, that there ſhould be ſexes among vegetables, until obſervations upon the farina of lillies, upon the duſt flying among the bloſſoms of mulberries, and the female date-tree becoming barren after cutting down the male, brought the other doctrine into vogue. A few years ago the propagation of animals without ſexes would have been thought contradictory to experience: notwithſtanding which many have been ſince perſuaded of the fact by their own experiments, or other perſons accounts concerning the freſh-water polypus.

2. Such inſtances happening more than once or twice, might convince us that experience is not ſo infallible a guide, as to juſtify our refuſing information from any other hand; for in truth it never makes us thorough maſters of the ſubject; we may know enough for our preſent uſes, but can never know there is not more to be learnt, beſide what we have diſcovered.

Our overweening conceit ſtands upon a hollow foundation, being nothing elſe than the perſuaſion that our idea of things comprehends their whole eſſence, whereas our diſcernment reaches not to their eſſence; we can only obſerve what effects they work upon our ſenſes or upon one another, and from thence deduce imperfectly the powers belonging to them and cauſes operating upon them; but can make no juſt deduction, that there are not other powers and cauſes whoſe effects we have never yet experienced. Therefore as has been argued in the Chapter on Judgement, we have no ſuch thing belonging to us as abſolute certainty: the notion of it ſprings from vanity, as if it were beneath us to act or think upon lower grounds. But it has been ſhown in the ſame place, that although certainty was not made for man, yet man may do well enough without it: the ſtrongeſt aſſurance we can get upon the beſt grounds of experience is our proper guide, which we ſhall do right to follow, yet need not pay ſuch implicit ſubmiſſion, as to pronounce it impoſſible we can ever have juſt cauſe to look aſide upon ſome other object.

It will be ſaid all this has nothing to do with miracle, for ſhould we diſcover ſome new kind of operation unknown to the ſons of men, we ſhould ſtill believe it natural, owing to a latent property always belonging to the bodies exerting it, though never before obſerved. Thoſe who

have

have changed their opinion upon equivocal or univocal generation, upon the ſexes of bloſſoms, or upon the hatching of Polypus's, thought, we, ſuppoſe, they had found out a ſecret in nature, and a force put upon her by ſuperior power producing an operation ſhe was not able to perform. Very well, but let us firſt examine what we are to underſtand by nature, for in ſome ſenſes perhaps we may find that to be a ſecret of nature which we vulgarly call ſupernatural. I do not know any body of whoſe perſon and features we have a more unſettled idea than that ſame dame Nature, we all think ourſelves extremely well acquainted with her: do but mention her name, and every body knows whom you ſpeak of without aſking queſtions, and yet we are perpetually varying our idea of her ſhape and ſize: but it becomes profound ſpeculatiſts, who ſet up for reforming the reaſon of mankind, to know what they talk about before they deſcant upon it.

Let us obſerve to them then, that nature is ſometimes oppoſed to education, and natural endowments diſtinguiſhed from acquired: we are ſuppoſed to run about in our childhood and ſpeak our mother tongue naturally, but nobody learns Latin or dancing from nature, and cuſtom is ſaid to change our nature. Phyſicians are called in to relieve us from obſtructions that nature cannot remove: farmers by cultivation make the ground yield them crops that it would never

never have produced naturally: gardeners by inoculation cauſe their trees to bear other than the natural fruits: and in general the term artificial ſtands in contradiſtinction to natural. Ingratitude, drunkenneſs, beſtiality, treaſon, animoſity between near relations, are termed unnatural. Yet I ſuppoſe in all theſe caſes, what is done more than nature can do, will hardly be counted ſupernatural; which ſhews that we uſe the term Nature in a more or leſs extenſive ſenſe according to the occaſion whereon we apply it.

3. The word Nature when ſtanding alone commonly denotes the properties of bodies and courſe of operations among them falling under our notice; the ſeveral ſpecies of animals, plants, foſſils, and ſo forth, their production, preſervation, their powers and qualities affecting one another: all which I take to be the objects of phyſiology, or natural philoſophy, and whoever could underſtand them all compleatly, would be deemed to have a thorough knowledge of nature. Yet this idea of it will not fully ſuffice to carry us through our preſent queſtion, which extends to a larger compaſs: the knowledge, the ſentiments, the powers and actions of man, together with ethics, politics, mechanics, manufactures, commerce, and other arts and ſciences dependent thereon, all which the naturaliſt has nothing to do with, yet muſt all be added to his ſtock to make up that nature whereof we may have experience, and beyond

beyond whoſe experienced powers we would pronounce every thing ſupernatural, and incredible.

But with this addition are we ſure of having the whole of nature ſtill? before we can proceed ſecure in confidence of having gotten all our materials together, we ſhall have this preliminary to conteſt. For there are thoſe who think that from the view of this nature, they can diſcover another beyond, whereof this is only a part, and the rules whereby it is governed, only municipal laws of a ſingle province within a boundleſs empire: and that there is a univerſal nature having general laws ſuperior to the municipal, connecting all particular ſyſtems in one well regulated polity under one ſupreme Governor. Now let our experience of this ſublunary globe and the tranſactions upon it be ever ſo compleat, what can we know by it concerning the general polity, or how far that may, or may not over-rule the particular one provided here?

But you ſuppoſe the municipal laws are ſo provided as to make a part of the general, and therefore they will not be broken in upon, nor muſt we expect to ſee things conducted otherwiſe than by them until tranſported into ſome other province, where there is another ſyſtem prevailing. Why, ſo I ſuppoſe too, becauſe I never yet ſaw an alteration made in them, and ſhall continue to ſuppoſe until I ſee cogent reaſon

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to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, and I think I have ſhewn myſelf throughout the courſe of this work, as hearty a friend to nature and experience as need be deſired: nevertheleſs this ſuppoſition, though a rational one is but ſuppoſition, amounting to a moral not a mathematical certainty, nor ſtrong enough to render all evidence whatever to the contrary invalid, or make it abſolutely incredible that ſuch ſhould be produced.

For let us conſider how far our experience depoſes: that there are ſuch powers of nature and ſuch an order as we find operating and prevailing here, but with regard to all beyond it is totally ſilent: it informs us nothing concerning creatures inviſible, what powers or views they may have or cannot have, what inducements or reſtraints with reſpect to their interfering in ſublunary affairs. Therefore to argue in Mr Adams's way, evidence offered to prove an interpoſition either of the divine power or inviſible creatures, does not contradict experience, becauſe it depoſes to a point whereon that depoſes nothing. All that experience informs us of relative to the caſe is, the capacity of ſubſtances within our notice to receive poſitions and ſtations by foreign operation upon them; thus far then both evidences agree in their teſtimony, for what miracle does not work a change of ſtation in ſubſtances, or put them into a poſition we know them capable of receiving?

It

It is now an inconteſted principle that all matter is homogeneous, the difference in bodies ariſing from compoſition or the different poſition of their component particles with reſpect to one another: ſo that wine conſiſts of the ſame matter with water, every particle of one being capable of taking its place in the other, and of receiving the motion requiſite to convey it into ſuch place. But we never know an inſtance of water changed into wine, otherwiſe than by a paſſage through circulating veſſels of the vine and the grape, and perhaps in its way receiving an acceſſion of other particles which never were in the compoſition of water. What then? we may ſtill know that the matter compoſing thoſe particles was capable of ſtanding in ſuch arrangement as would have made it water; and experience depoſes nothing concerning other powers than thoſe falling under our notice; whether they have or have not ſkill, diſcernment, and activity, ſufficient to change the arrangement of matter in water, ſo that it ſhall inſtantaneouſly become wine.

In like manner we know by experience that matter is capable of ſtanding in the arrangement of the human body performing circulation and other vital functions; and ſpiritual ſubſtance is capable of taking a ſtation in ſuch part of the compoſition where it may receive the notices brought by the organs of ſenſation; both which together make a living man. We know not what

what corporeal particle, nor what manner of adherence, holds the perceptive ſubſtance in vital union: however we know it is there, and when once diſlodged, have no reaſon ever to expect its return, becauſe we ſee the machine continually tend more and more to corruption. But we have no experience to aſſure us there are not other agents who have command enough over the motion both of corporeal and ſpiritual particles to reinſtate them exactly in the ſtations we have already ſeen them capable of occupying, in which caſe the dead man would be reſtored to life: and until ſuch aſſurance can be had, the fact muſt remain credible.

Since then we find by experience of natural motions that ſubſtances are capable of receiving miraculous changes, upon what grounds can we deny Almighty power capable of working them? or even pronounce peremptorily upon the incapacity of other powers? If there be a mundane Soul, ſuch as I have deſcribed in treating upon that article, extending every where, permeating every thing, perceptive and active throughout, intelligent in every part by communication of lights from the reſt: I ſee nothing inconceivable in the thought of his turning water into wine, or reſtoring a dead man to life, or even making a new man by arranging the elements into a vital machine, and ſtationing therein one of his own component particles: this ſeems to me ſo far from being contrary to

reaſon,

reaſon, that it does not riſe above reaſon: nor do I find a difficulty in comprehending it ſo great, as in comprehending how I move my own limbs. If I believe no ſuperior power does interfere to diſturb the courſes of viſible nature, becauſe I ſee no reaſon for it, it does not follow from thence, that I never can ſee reaſon: for there is a material difference between finding no reaſon for a thing, and finding a ſolid reaſon againſt it; the one ſuffices for me to withhold my aſſent, the other alone can warrant me to condemn it as incredible.

4. I do not know that it is needful to add any thing in particular upon Revelation, as a diſtinct ſpecies of miraculous operations: becauſe I apprehend it might be effected by an arrangement of particles or change of modification in our mental organization, ſimilar to thoſe made in bodies by the others. Men commonly conceive their dormant ſtores of knowledge to be ſomething, they do not know what, whether ſubſtance or modification, or component part, lying in the mind itſelf, and therefore not capable of loco-motion, or diverſity of arrangement. I have examined this matter carefully in the Chapter on Judgement and other places, and found reaſon to conclude, that the mind or purely ſpiritual part receives nothing beſides perception nor can contain any thing it does not actually perceive: that in all perception there muſt be two things employed, one to diſcern, the

the other to be the object diſcerned; which object cannot be ſomething within the ſubſtance of the mind itſelf, unleſs you will ſuppoſe her to conſiſt of parts, ſome blind and imperceptive, producing no effect until touching the others notice.

Therefore the objects muſt be exhibited by ſome thing external to the perceptive mind, which ſomething I have termed the mental organization, the various arrangement or motion (for I do not pretend to determine which) of whoſe particles form the judgements that we diſcern: in a manner analogous to that of writing, where the ſhape and arrangement of the letters preſents the ſenſe of them to your thought; or of ſpeech, where the modulations of ſound produce the ſame effect. Our judgements in the natural way proceed ordinarily from inſtruction, conviction, or experience, but ſometimes we find them ariſe from other cauſes: in dreams and deluſions they are produced by mechanical operation; ſtrong liquors, indigeſtion, external accident, and paſſion, often make us judge very differently of things; eagerneſs of deſire will aſſure us of ſucceſs beyond all grounds of expectation, and terror magnifies dangers. Archbiſhop Tillotſon ſays, that many people have told a lie ſo often until they believed it to be true: and we may have known perſons who remembered having given a key or a paper to ſomebody elſe, and immediately after

after found it in their own pockets. All which ſhews that judgement is not paſſed upon knowledge in the mind itſelf, which we may preſume would be immutable while depoſited there, but upon repreſentations exhibited in ſomething elſe, which is capable of receiving changes from external and mechanical cauſes.

And though we have no ground from experience to think but theſe cauſes act naturally, yet ſince we have not experience of univerſal nature, that does not hinder the operation of other cauſes from producing different modifications, which will exhibit correſpondent ſcenes of judgement for the mind to inſpect, and whatever the mind ſees there from time to time, that is, her preſent determination. Therefore though I believe it never actually done, yet I conceive it very feaſible in theory, that ſuch a Being as we have imagined the mundane Soul, might hold diſcourſe with a man by ſuggeſting ideas to his thought, like thoſe another would excite in converſation: and by this means inſtruct him in knowledge he could not have attained any other way, deſcribe perſons and tranſactions he never ſaw, declare to him future events that human ſagacity could not diſcover, inſpire him with ſentiments, move his paſſions, and rouze up a ſpirit to any particular undertaking, more effectually than the moſt accompliſhed orator with all his powers of perſuaſion.

5. It may be ſaid that all we have urged hitherto amounts to no more, than that there may be a power of making ſupernatural effects, but ſhews no probability that ſuch a power ever is excited. I do not deſire it ſhould; I would have them ſtill remain improbable, all I contend for is only a poſſibility: but things improbable have ſometimes been known to come to paſs, therefore improbability alone will not ſtop our ears againſt all evidence offered to prove their reality. Nevertheleſs it may be denied that we have yet made out even a poſſibility: becauſe the acts of voluntary agents, and ſuch we muſt ſuppoſe all workers of ſupernatural effects to be, for neceſſary agents can never ſtir a ſtep beyond the laws of nature impoſing the neceſſity upon them, may be rendered impoſſible by their repugnance to the character of the agent, how much ſoever they lie within his power to perform. A miſer has it in his power to make ducks and drakes of his guineas; a nobleman to hire himſelf out at harveſt as a common labourer; a fond mother to ſtrangle the child ſhe doats upon: yet we ſhall think theſe things impoſſible to be done by the perſons to whom we know it is eaſily poſſible to do them; and this impoſſibility ſuffices to make the fact incredible. Now the character of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs belonging to God, and the like character of univerſal benevolence and as boundleſs intelligence as created Being can poſſeſs,

poſſeſs, aſcribed to the mundane Soul, will not leave it credible, that the original plan of creation ſhould have been laid imperfect ſo as to need occaſional corrections, or without ſuch need that either would interpoſe to diſturb the order of nature in any ſingle inſtance, much leſs would employ their ſuperior power in hurtful, idle, or trifling operations.

All this I very readily admit, as well the aſſumption, as the inference deduced from it: but do we know the original plan ſo perfectly as to be aſſured the lines of connection between the ſeveral ſyſtems comprized in it may never work an alteration in the laws of viſible nature; or that ſome interpoſitions were not contained within the plan, and made eſſential parts of it. For why is it neceſſary that every ſupernatural operation muſt be a ſudden expedient to ſupply an unforeſeen defect, and not a preconcerted deſign interwoven among the order eſtabliſhed for ſecond cauſes? Nobody can well doubt but God might have cauſed the corn to ſprout up ſpontaneouſly, or houſes fit for our commodious habitation to grow out of the ground like trees: yet he has ſo contrived his laws of nature here below, as to make the interpoſition of human induſtry neceſſary to preſerve this ſublunary ſyſtem from falling defective. What then ſhould hinder but that he may have purpoſely framed his laws of viſible nature incompleat without ſome ſupernatural interpoſitions

to fill up the remaining ſpaces in his plan of univerſal polity? And whether theſe interpoſitions be made by immediate exertion of Omnipotence, or by miniſtry of the mundane Spirits, vulgarly called Angels, either upon expreſs command or upon diſcernment of the expedience, is not material to our preſent purpoſe.

6. Then for things pernicious, wanton, and trifling, I muſt own it appears to me incredible that any ſuch ſhould be the work of God or his ſuperior order of creatures: but are we ſuch perfect maſters of wiſdom and goodneſs, as always to know aſſuredly what is, or is not inconſiſtent therewith? The conceit of this knowledge makes people think hardly of Providence for the few evils ſcattered about in nature, and has driven ſome to deny a Providence upon account of the many errors and waſtes, worthleſs productions, and unavailing accidents, obſervable every where, in which they can ſee no uſe nor deſign. But we ſee not the half of nature nor of the conſequences reſulting from events paſſing within our view, ſo there may be good fruits produced by things that yield nothing but evil ſo far as we can diſcern, and important uſes in what appears to us unprofitable and frivolous: nor is it unlikely that the wiſdom of God ſhould ſeem fooliſhneſs to men, or the follies of men be turned by him to ſerve wiſe and excellent purpoſes. Perſons following different profeſſions and ſciences are no competent

competent judges of the pertinence of one anothers proceedings: that may appear idle and nugatory to the unſkilled, which the profeſſor knows to be very material and neceſſary: much leſs can we undertake to pronounce upon the actions of creatures of different natures, or ſay with confidence what is becoming or important for them to do, and what unworthy their attention.

Some have amuſed themſelves in a vacant hour with imagining what ideas the brute creatures muſt entertain of our tranſactions, ſuppoſing them endued with underſtanding and reflection like ours. It is certain that no underſtanding can proceed further than what it may ſtrike out from the materials it has to work upon, all beyond muſt appear wilderneſs and amazement: therefore the animals having little intercourſe among us in our affairs, nor means of information by ſpeech, would have no conception of our politics, commerce, mechanics, mathematics, rhetoric, faſhion, and other methods of employing our time, but our proceedings muſt appear for the moſt part ſtrange and unaccountable. I have heard a ſtory of ſome very valuable jewel or piece of plate in a houſe having been loſt in ſuch manner as to make it certain ſome of the family had taken it, but no ſuſpicion could be faſtened upon any particular perſon, for they all denied having any knowledge of the matter. The vicar was called in

to examine them, but being able to get nothing out by his interrogatories, he engaged to discover the thief by art magic: for he had a cock among his poultry of wonderful ſagacity, that being rightly prepared and ſituated, would know the touch of a light fingered perſon in the dark; ſo he fetched the cock tied down upon a neſt of hay in a baſket, which was placed at the further end of a darkened room: the ſervants were ordered to go in one by one and ſtroke the back of the cock, who upon feeling the delinquent would inſtantly crow. They went in each of them alone and returned, but ſtill the cock did not crow. Our conjurer ſeemed ſurprized, for he ſaid he never knew the cock fail before, and ſurely they had not all touched him. Yes, indeed, and indeed they had. Pray, ſays he, lets ſee your hands. Upon turning them up, the palms of all except one were found as black as the chimney ſtock, for he had beſmeared the cock's back with greaſe and lamp black, of which thoſe who were conſcious of their innocence, had taken a ſtrong impreſſion by giving a hearty rub, but the guilty perſon, though having no great faith in the cock's virtue, yet not knowing what tricks your learned men may play, thought it ſafeſt not to venture, eſpecially as his word muſt be taken, there being no witneſſes in the room with him to ſee how he behaved.

Now

Now imagine the parſon's poultry poſſeſſing as large a ſhare of the rational faculty as you pleaſe, they will never be able to account for theſe ceremonies undergone by the cock: but when he got home to relate his adventures, if there were any freethinking cockerills in the henrooſt, they would treat it as an idle incredible tale; for there could be no uſe nor purpoſe in daubing his back, tying him in a baſket, ſhutting him up in a dark room, and ſending ſo many different people to rub him over. Certainly ſay they, our daddy begins to doat, and vents his dreams for real facts: Or elſe has been perching careleſsly upon the edge of a tub until he fell backwards into ſome filthy ſtuff within it, and now would impoſe this invention upon the credulous vulgar among the chicken kind, to ſet us a pecking away the greaſe from his feathers, in hopes we ſhall foul our bills or ſpoil our ſtomachs ſo that we cannot eat, and then he will have all our barley to himſelf.

To return now to the human ſpecies: it is far from incredible, that our ſentiments and tranſactions are of ſome uſes to inviſible orders of Beings, but what thoſe uſes are or how reſulting, we have no ſort of means to inveſtigate: therefore it is impoſſible for us to know what thoughts or actions of ours might not be ſerviceable to them, which yet would not follow in the ordinary courſe of natural cauſes. We

know that deluſions have abounded in the world; and upon the principle of All things ordered for the beſt, we may preſume there is ſome good uſe of their ſo abounding: why then may not the ſame apprehenſions and ſtate of mind be excited by real appearances, as are now effected by deluſion? Thus much we may allow, that many a man has been perſuaded of a ſuperior power by means of his imagination, whoſe underſtanding was too dull, too ſuperficial, or too little exerciſed, ever to have been convinced by rational proof, and ſuch perſuaſion, though leaving groſs and erroneous impreſſions behind, yet is better than none at all. For my part, I ſee nothing abſolutely incredible even in the common tales of witches, fairies, and apparitions: though they carry ſo ſtrong an improbability as not to be overcome by any evidence I have yet met with in ſupport of them. But I do not think ſo highly of my judgement as to take its deciſions for mathematical demonſtration, or imagine any improbabilities diſcerned by it abſolutely invincible: a moral aſſurance to the excluſion of all doubt in the higheſt pitch I can expect to reach, but I have ſometimes found reaſon for doubting upon points whereof I had not any the leaſt ſuſpicion before.

7. With regard to the ſpeculative credibility of interpoſition, I have obſerved on the Chapter on Providence that the conſtitution of all

created intelligences, ſo far as we can comprehend of them, ſeems to require it: for if God had reſted from his works from everlaſting, having once for all given ſuch a vigour and regularity to nature as that it might have proceeded on its courſe for ever without needing the further touch of his hand, all dependence and thought of him muſt have been utterly loſt from among them. For he would have been deemed to have delivered them over to the eſtabliſhment of ſecond cauſes, with which alone they had concern: ſo the queſtion whether all things had a beginning, or from what power derived, would have remained a matter of mere curioſity. And within the ſphere of our experience we ſee what efficacy the opinion of divine interpoſitions has to preſerve a ſenſe of God upon the mind. It can hardly be denied, that much more than half the Religion of mankind grows from this root, which if you could totally eradicate, you would leave very little notion of him remaining in the world. Men at beſt would proceed upon the principles laid down at the concluſion of my firſt Volume, of conſulting the good of others ſo far as their own temporal intereſts were concerned: and it muſt be great luck to prevail on them to practiſe ſo much goodneſs as that.

Then if we proceed from the abſtractions of theory to reaſon upon facts, we ſhall find, as has been already urged in the ſame Chapter, that

that neither the preſent form of this Earth we inhabit, nor courſes of the planets compoſing the ſolar ſyſtem, could have been eternal, nor probably co-eval with the exiſtence of matter and general laws of ſolidity, impulſe, attraction, repulſion and motion: therefore there muſt have been an interpoſition to produce the preſent order of viſible nature out of the confuſion of a Chaos, or out of ſome former order obtaining before. Thus here ſeems to be a poſitive proof deduced from experience that the divine Power, either by itſelf or by ſome ſufficient miniſter, does interfere with the laws of univerſal nature in the production of a new ſyſtem, which was not provided for by thoſe laws: what then ſhould hinder but that the like might interfere upon great and important occaſions, during the continuance of a ſyſtem? Nor is experience wanting in the apprehenſion of moſt people of events happening among us daily, which upon reflection muſt be acknowledged miraculous in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, that is, immediate effects of almighty power without any ſecond cauſe intervening.

One cannot always tell what grounds to go upon in arguing with particular perſons, their notions being ſo various, and ſo often kept in reſerve, as makes it difficult to know what they will admit and what they will deny. But it is the orthodox and current opinion, that the Souls of men were created at ſome time while

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the fœtus lay growing in the womb. But it muſt be acknowledged that no created Being, of how exalted a nature ſoever, can produce a new ſubſtance out of non-entity, or be employed as a miniſter in the operation. The laws and higheſt powers of nature can do no more than form compounds of the materials under their command; which materials, if corporeal, can at beſt make but an exquiſite machinery, deſtitute of all perception and voluntary motion, unleſs ſome particle of ſpiritual ſubſtance be ſtationed therein, drawn from another fund where it had reſided before. But to breathe into the organized clay a breath of life no where exiſting before, ſo as that the compoſition ſhall become a living ſoul, muſt be the work of no leſs than God himſelf. So that miracles are ſo far from being incredible or even uncommon, that we have them continually worked, as often as a child is born, if not as often as a woman becomes pregnant.

8. Perhaps theſe daily creations will not be counted miraculous, becauſe happening daily, and nothing be admitted to bear that title, unleſs what is rare and extraordinary: but whether we give them the epithet or no, their eſſence remains the ſame, and there may be wiſdom and expedience in a meaſure taken upon particular occaſions, though it be not repeated perpetually. To reject every thing as incredible merely for its being ſtrange and unuſual, would

would be doing like the loweſt of the vulgar, who can ſcarce be brought to credit any thing of the manners or ingenuity of foreigners, very different from what they have been accuſtomed to ſee: or like thoſe who will not believe an hiſtorian relating that the beaux of king Edward the fourth's reign wore their ſhoes of ſuch enormous length, they were forced to tie up the toes by a ſtring coming from the knee, to prevent their doubling under them. So that this argument proceeds at beſt upon the principles of the nurſery, for it is much the ſame with that uſed by my children's nurſe, when upon ſeeing a picture of my Euridice brought home, ſhe cried Lauk! that cannot be like miſtreſs, for ſhe has never a blue gown. But if this anile objection muſt prevail with us, yet it will not hold good againſt the miracles moſt ſtrongly contended for, which for ſome years during the Chriſtian, and ſome ages during the Jewiſh diſpenſations, were ſo frequent that they can ſcarcely be called ſtrange and unuſual events, ſo much as an eſtabliſhed method of government.

Nevertheleſs how much ſoever this objection may be the real obſtacle with men againſt the credibility of miracles, they may not know it themſelves; for it is neither miraculous nor uncommon with us to miſtake the true grounds of our perſuaſions: and we find it now backed with another, namely, that the caſe of the

miracles

miracles they reject, is not the ſame with that of the acts of Omnipotence exerted in the formation of a world, or the creation of Souls for children. For the firſt of theſe gave beginning to a ſyſtem of nature not before exiſtent, and the latter co-operate with the natural laws of generation to finiſh the work they muſt have left imperfect: but that a wiſe Governor ſhould innovate upon the laws himſelf had provided, or break through them while ſubſiſting unrepealed, ſtill remains incredible.

To this I ſhall anſwer that all interpoſition does not make innovation in the laws eſtabliſhed. What if water was once changed into wine, the laws of nature producing wine by the vine and the grape continue ſtill the ſame. What if injunction was once given to cut off every ſoul of the Amalekites, the laws of humanity and mercy, of love even to enemies, ſtill remain inviolate, and have been ſtrongly inculcated by the ſame authority which iſſued the injunction. If we muſt be obliged to juſtify the ways of God by the proceedings of man, let us recollect there have been many ſuſpenſions of human laws upon particular occaſions: we have known it done in our own times upon the Habeas corpus act, that great barrier of our liberties, yet without derogating from the wiſdom either of the law or the legiſlature.

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And the interpoſitions now in queſtion muſt appear leſs incredible when we conſider the purpoſe for which they are ſuppoſed to have been made, not to ſupply defects in the laws provided, but to manifeſt the dominion of the Governor: which it is notorious was ſo far overlooked, that many laboured arguments have been carried on in proſe and verſe, in ſeriouſneſs and ridicule, to prove the laws ſelf-ordained without a legiſlator to enact them, or governor able to controul them. Were there a kingdom ſo well policied as that all things might be kept in order every where by ſubordinate magiſtrates fully inſtructed in their duty; yet if the people in ſome diſtant corner, ſeeing nothing higher than conſtables and juſtices among them, ſhould grow refractory, as thinking thoſe officers acted upon their own authority, would it not be more than credible, that the prince ſhould manifeſt himſelf by ſome ſignal interpoſition of power, to convince the mutineers of his dominion.

Then if we take the whole ſeries of interpoſitions jointly, they may not unfitly be likened to thoſe uſed in the formation of a world: for we may reflect how great an influence they have had upon the moral world which is a part of the natural, introducing a new ſyſtem of thinking and acting, ſcarce leſs important than that formed at what is vulgarly called the creation,

out of a chaos of ignorance, darkneſs and uncertainty; or as the orthodox ſay, out of the ruins of an old ſyſtem originally perfect.

From all theſe conſiderations I think it may be fairly concluded, that miracles are not eſſentially incredible, nor the evidences of them deſerving to be rejected without hearing: and though not diſcoverable by reaſon founded on experience, yet neither are they contrary to reaſon, or experience, nor like the idle tale of a man who ſhould pretend by his natural ſagacity to have found out a method of flying about in the air; becauſe we know the extent of human powers, and know that this exploit does not lie within them.

9. Nevertheleſs, credible as I have endeavoured to ſhow them, I ſtill hold them highly improbable: but that I may not give offence by being miſapprehended, I muſt beg leave to explain my meaning in this poſition. It was not in my thought to pronounce upon the validity of the evidence offered in ſupport of them, for it does not ſuit with the character I have aſſumed of a neutral, to determine any thing concerning their probability in the manner wherein they are introduced for every bodies examination: all I intended was to aſſert that in themſelves, diveſted of their external proofs, they are not eaſy to be credited. So that ſuppoſing I had never heard of any ſuch thing till

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this day, and juſt now ſome learned man were to tell me he had met with a book wherein were reported the ſtories of the burning buſh, the rod turned into a ſerpent, the recalling Lazarus to life, and ſuch like, I ſhould think them extremely improbable: and though upon mature reflection, not abſolutely incredible (for perhaps on firſt hearing I might deem them ſo,) yet requiring very weighty and cogent evidence before I could believe them.

For experience is our proper guide, the foundation of all our knowledge; If we are to place no confidence in that, we have nothing to truſt to: therefore all deviations therefrom deſerve juſtly to be ſuſpected as falſe appearances until confirmed by reaſonings drawn from experience, for thoſe may ſometimes convince us, that things muſt have happened otherwiſe than we have experimented, as in the caſe of creation, which we never ſaw an inſtance of, yet may gather from what we have ſeen, that there muſt have been ſuch an operation, either in time or from everlaſting. Had we miracles worked among us the caſe would be different, for then after being ſatisfied upon careful examination that our ſenſes had not deceived us, we ſhould have their experience to atteſt the truth of the fact; which is the ſame evidence we have for common phenomena: but our evidence of ſupernatural events comes only by

by relation and traditionary proof, and this we muſt weigh in the like manner as we do other things whereof we have not the direct teſtimony of our ſenſes.

We cannot penetrate into the conſtitution of nature nor eſſence of things, we can only obſerve how they conſtantly operate in thoſe inſtances wherewith we have familiar acquaintance, and what are the ordinary courſes of Providence: which affords a juſt preſumption, that nothing will fall out otherwiſe than we have experienced, and whatever relation varies therefrom muſt conſequently be improbable the improbability riſing in proportion to the width of the variance. What has been may be, is a common ſaying, and a very juſt one: to which we may add, what has conſtantly happened in one manner may be preſumed will always happen in the ſame, as being occaſioned by certain cauſes which cannot operate otherwiſe. Therefore the operations of nature, ſo far as we have intimate acquaintance among them, raiſe a juſt expectation that they will always continue the ſame courſe, together with a perſuaſion, that they ever have done ſo from their beginning to work: and every relation of a ſupernatural event, being contrary to this perſuaſion, or as commonly expreſſed contradicting experience, is highly improbable in itſelf, not to be credited without the ſtrongeſt evidence to juſtify our aſſent.

10. To aſcertain what evidence ſuffices to overcome this improbability might be impoſſible, for certainty was not made for man, nor have we any one channel of knowledge to be depended upon as infallible: we can only collect our proofs on all ſides, weighing and comparing them together carefully, and then every man muſt uſe his beſt judgement to determine upon the whole view of particulars. Undoubtedly the degree of improbability deſerves its ſhare in the eſtimation: for nobody in his ſober ſenſes would not credit one fact upon much ſlighter evidence than he ſhould think neceſſary to eſtabliſh the truth of another. Should a perſon unknown tell me there were two men boxing together in the next ſtreet, I might believe him, for ſuch things happen every now and then among porters and carmen: ſhould he add, that the combatants had the dreſs and appearance of gentlemen, I ſhould think, to uſe the newspaper phraſe, the thing merited confirmation: but if the like were told of two perſons whom I knew to be men of grave deportment, good rank and character, there would need a hoſt of witneſſes to convince me of the fact.

Therefore when we reflect on the juſt and natural weight of improbability, it ſeems rather too daring an enterprize of divines, when they undertake to prove their allegations, if we will only allow the ſacred writings ſo much credit

credit as we give to a common hiſtorian: for I cannot help joining with Middleton, that if ſome of the accounts recorded there were found only in Sanconiathon's Phenician hiſtory, no man of thought or learning would heed them, or at moſt regard them, otherwiſe than as fabulous and allegorical, concealing a moral which nobody now could develop. But this does not hurt their cauſe, for I ſuppoſe none of them will deny the authority of Moſes and Matthew to be ſomething better than that of Sanconiathon or Livy.

On the other hand it is againſt nature that men ſhould knowingly embrace or needleſsly propagate error: they may frequently be led into it by deluſion, or miſlead others for deſigns of their own, but without ſome good ground of ſuſpicion that theſe cauſes interfered, our rule remains valid. Therefore whatever is generally received, or ſedulouſly inculcated by teachers of whom we have a good opinion, or ſtrongly believed by the party himſelf upon former conviction of his underſtanding, though the motives be now forgotten, carries a juſt preſumption of its being true, and any thing offered in contradiction has its improbability too, for which he may as reaſonably demand of the freethinker a good evidence ſufficient to overcome the improbability, as the latter may demand of him a good evidence ſufficient to overcome the improbability of ſupernatural

operation; and the evidences ought to be encreaſed in proportion to the degrees of improbability.

11. This improbability of things happening out of the natural way, deſerves the authority of a general rule, which if admitting of exceptions, yet is not invalidated thereby: but ſtill ought to take place in every inſtance where there is not particular cogent evidence of an excepted caſe. Some people are ſo fond of miracle, they would give every thing that conſtruction: if once perſuaded that a perſon has worked them, they will ſcarce allow him to do any thing like other men. When the Jews took up ſtones to caſt at Jeſus, we are told he withdrew himſelf out of their ſight; this the commentators will have to have been done miraculouſly; but ſurely any common man, having a troop of his friends behind him might ſlip away among them without a ſupernatural power. For my part I think a backwardneſs to miracle more commendable, nor would I chooſe to conſtrue any thing ſuch, until I had tried all poſſible ways to account for it by natural cauſes.

A propenſity to the miraculous draws on many pernicious and fatal conſequences: it leads in the high road to enthuſiaſm, ſpiritual pride, cenſoriouſneſs, and deſpondency upon finding the uſual flood of illumination fall ſhort; for indigeſtion, failing of ſpirits, and bodily infirmity, muſt

muſt not be natural: it gives narrow unworthy notions of the Deity, debaſing his Majeſty, corrupting his Purity, and vitiating his Holineſs, making him ſubject to unaccountable ſudden turns of humour like men, ſoothed with adoration and prone to take offence at trifles: it entirely takes away the uſe of reaſon, for there is no reaſoning but only fancying upon the divine counſels: and prevents that inveſtigation of natural cauſes which might conduct to the ſoundeſt and manlieſt conception of his Providence, and beſt grounded admiration of his wiſdom in bringing his purpoſes to bear by a long complicated ſucceſſion of variouſly working ſecond cauſes. Then if ſpread among the vulgar, it drives them headlong into ſuperſtition of all idle terrifying kinds, dreams, prognoſtics, judgements, fatalities, conjurations, ſigns, viſions, apparitions, and ſuch like: ſo that they may be ſaid ſcarce to be converſant among mankind, but to live in a fairy world inhabited by phantoms, ſpectres, and hobgoblings.

Upon contemplation of theſe evils we may find excuſe for the freethinker: for if, as may be concluded from the near reſemblance of features between him and the bigot obſerved in Chap. VIII. he be of ſo unhappy a temperament as that he muſt run into extremes, having none other option than either to believe nothing or believe any thing, it were difficult to ſay which of the two were the prudenter choice.

And he ſeems ſenſible of his infirmity, as one may gueſs by his drawing the ridicule wherewith he continually pelts religion from the topics of vulgar ſuperſtition: as if he were conſcious, that with his clumſy fingers he could not take Religion without taking too all the cobwebs and trumpery that have clung about it in ſome dirty corner of the nurſery.

12. I have remarked juſt now two oppoſite improbabilities to be weighed againſt one another, that if any thing being put out of its natural courſe, and that of ſober wiſe men giving credit to ſuch events without ſufficient foundation: beſides which there are many circumſtances attendant upon theſe two, deſerving a place in the ſcale, among which we may reckon the nature and tendencies of the event. If a man of honeſt judicious character but a little ſtraitened in preſent caſh, ſhould receive a ſtrong impreſſion in a dream, that his deceaſed friend had bid him look under a particular buſh ſtanding near the path he intended to go along the next day, where he ſhould find a purſe of money: though he had no faith in dreams, it is very likely he might have the curioſity to poke about a little under the buſh. If the direction had been to lay five guineas there, which on his returning again the day after he ſhould find grown to a hundred, he would hardly care to run the riſk: yet upon the advice being repeated four or five ſucceſſive nights with preſſing entreaties

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and expoſtulations, he might be tempted to try the experiment. But if he were commanded to break open a neighbour's houſe for the money with an aſſurance of the deed being lawful and ſafe, I imagine he would require a better warrant than twenty dreams, before he would proceed to execution. In like manner if other perſons had told him of having had ſuch dreams, and found them accompliſhed in all points upon following their directions, he would want different degrees of evidence to convince him of their relations reſpectively being true.

Therefore where the facts reported are frivolous, unbecoming or repugnant to our ideas of juſtice and mercy, they carry a higher degree of improbability upon that account: for though we have not ſo perfect knowledge of what is agreeable to wiſdom and goodneſs as to render every thing appearing fooliſhneſs and evil incredible, yet we muſt and ought to give their due weight to the judgements of our underſtanding, that ſalutary guide given us from God for our general direction. Where the facts are indifferent and innocent, leſs urgent proofs will do. Where they appear important, conducive to ſome gracious purpoſe, well ſuiting with the dignity and character of the performer, a ſingle witneſs of good repute, depoſing upon his own knowledge, might ſuffice to gather our credit.

For this reaſon I apprehend it very material to take the internal evidence of a Religion into account in judging of the external: for where a ſyſtem of doctrine eſteemed highly beneficial to mankind, as tending to work an advantageous change in their ſentiments and manners, is ſuggeſted to have been introduced by a ſeries of ſupernatural interpoſitions, their improbability almoſt vaniſhes before hearing the particular teſtimonies alledged in ſupport of them. And one may obſerve, that the external evidences, by the accounts tranſmitted of them, ſeem to have been purpoſely given in ſuch meaſure as to weigh down the balance, or not, according to the degree of improbability remaining in the oppoſite ſcale. Therefore they do not ſuffice for Religion in her depravations, which cannot ſtand their ground with their pretences to freſh ſupernatural teſtimonies.

So the Papiſts ſtill have miracles among them: and whoever will drudge through the journals of our Methodiſts, cannot help ſeeing they endeavour to perſuade the world of miraculous Providences, and a divine interpoſition perpetually accompanying them, as well in their ſpiritual as common tranſactions: ſo you muſt needs venerate them as Apoſtles, not for the ſacredneſs of their doctrine, but becauſe the hand of God manifeſts itſelf ſo ſignally in their favour. But in proportion to the purity and genuineneſs of a Religion taught, it ſtands

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in leſs need of additional teſtimonies to caſt the balance on its ſide. Therefore it is a circumſtance in favour of our divines, that they make no pretences to ſupernatural illuminations nor wonder-working powers, but undertake to maintain their cauſe by the old ones remaining upon record. Nobody can well doubt the power of God to have given more ſtriking evidences than he has done: and we may regard it as an inſtance of his wiſdom, that he has given them in ſuch juſt proportion as to take effect where they ought, and to fail where it is beſt they ſhould fail, that is, according as the Religion underſtood to be atteſted by them, is, or is not beneficial.

But we muſt take with us, that the eſſence of Religion lies in the ſentiments of the mind and diſpoſitions of the heart, not in any form of words or articles of belief which may raiſe very various and oppoſite apprehenſions in different perſons. Now if we examine what idea the freethinker entertains of our eſtabliſhed Religion, we ſhall find it a bundle of ſuperſtitions, abſurdities, tyranny, and prieſtcraft, carrying ſuch an improbability of being the work of God, as perhaps no reaſonable man would think overcome by the evidences alledged: therefore it is a mercy to the unbeliever, that theſe evidences are not more glaring, becauſe they might miſlead him into a Religion he is much better without,

without, than if he received it in that disfigured ſtate whereinto it has been caſt by his miſapprehenſion.

13. Then the other improbability, of relations being made or defended and gaining ground without ſufficient evidence, may likewiſe receive abatement by the circumſtances found to attend it. Intereſt may engage men to impoſe upon others, and the deſire of ingratiating with the powerful or the populace, raiſe defenders to an opinion they do not believe. Good policy will ſometimes ſuggeſt inventions to keep an ignorant people in order, who could not be brought to ſee the benefit of regularity and concord: and the reputation of an able diſputant urges ſome to maintain a point without ever conſidering it calmly. Notions early imbibed, and never called in queſtion among the company uſually converſed with, or having a connection with the profeſſion engaged in, will often give a ſecret bias to the honeſteſt minds to ſupport what they eſteem the common cauſe. A fondneſs for the miraculous, interwoven in many conſtitutions, has a ſurpriſing efficacy upon the imagination, changing the nature of things, and making their very improbability a motive for believing them. I have myſelf heard ſtories of apparitions, deaths foreboded by the party being ſeen in two places at once, and the like, upon teſtimony that would have convinced me

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of any common fact without leaving the leaſt ſhadow of doubt, and this by perſons who I was ſatisfied had no artifice nor intention to deceive me. And when this happens to be the national humour, one may expect it ſhould run far greater lengths than we can have experienced in this country of reaſon and ridicule, which for once may very properly join in alliance againſt ſuch an enemy.

But where ſuch propenſity is ſeconded by religious zeal, it is eaſy to imagine what wonders they may work by their united force, perverting the ſenſes to give falſe evidence, falſifying the records of the memory, making men undeſignedly add circumſtances that never happened to a real tranſaction, pick up ſtories from any body upon the ſlighteſt foundation, and report them again confidently as of their own knowledge. For every miracle full evidenced would be an inconteſtible proof of the being and dominion of a God, therefore all remiſſneſs in believing or defending it, is looked upon as the ſin of Atheiſm: which produces a poſitiveneſs and eagerneſs of aſſertion that nothing can compare with, except party zeal. Now whoever would go through a full and fair examination of ſupernatural hiſtory, ought to take all theſe things into conſideration, and give them each their juſt and proper weight in determining his judgement.

14. It

14. It is not my buſineſs to apply any of theſe circumſtances, nor to poize their reſpective weights in particular caſes, for this belongs rather to eccleſiaſtical hiſtory and knowledge of the world, than to philoſophy: it would be carrying the ſhoemaker beyond his laſt, and encroaching upon the province of divines. They may pleaſe to conſider, it is ſervice enough for one private man to have acted as pioneer, endeavouring to level that intrenchment of abſolute incredibility wherewith the enemy uſed to keep them at a diſtance, ſo that they may come directly to a general action: and to have reminded them of the ſeveral quarters in the adverſe camp, that they may take care to make the action general, and not in the hurry of purſuit leave vacant ſpaces unoccupied, where the enemy rallying from time to time may renew the fight unexpectedly.

For I would wiſh to have the faith of mankind compact and ſolid throughout: ſound not only in the articles believed, but in the foundations for believing. It is not unprecedented for men to build a real truth on hollow ground, in which caſe their faith is rather good fortune than good conduct, and will be apt to ſhake and totter grievouſly in the ſtorms of oppoſition, or batteries of ridicule. If I have any title to meddle with the merits of the cauſe, it muſt be in that part reſpecting the internal evidence, which we obſerved before has a juſt and ſtrong weight in

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the determination, and probably does actually caſt the balance with moſt perſons: but Religion, as has been already remarked, does not conſiſt ſo much in a ſet of articles, as in the ſenſe impreſſed by them upon the mind: ſo that the ſame outward form of profeſſion may contain very different Religions, ſome frivolous, abſurd and wicked, others noble, rational and holy, according as diverſly underſtood or apprehended in the mind of the hearer. Therefore what I am next going upon may be of ſome moment towards determining the judgement, which is to attempt explaining ſome of the orthodox tenets by the theory I have endeavoured to ſketch out in this work upon the principles of human reaſon, aiming to find out ſuch a ſenſe of them, without violence or wreſting, as may coincide or prove reconcileable therewith. By which whoever happens to come into my explanations will ſee what degree of improbability ſtill remains for the divine to overcome by ſkilful management of his weapons of external evidence.

15. Before I quit this ſubject, it may not be amiſs to beſtow a little conſideration upon the deſign of miracles, ſo far as diſcoverable to our apprehenſion. The interpoſition of omnipotence in the formation of a world, and the daily creation of Souls for children, were made eſſential parts in the original conſtitution of univerſal nature, without which the reſt of the divine plan would have remained imperfect, nor could have

have taken effect. For without the former, neither this Earth we inhabit, nor the productions formed therein could have had a being, and without the latter the race of men could not preſerved upon earth: ſo that thoſe may be ranked among the principal lines of the plan neceſſary to ſupport and ſuſtain one another. But theſe how much ſoever eſteemed the immediate work of God, are not vulgarly ſtiled miracles: for if a hundred young fellows and a hundred girls of vigorous conſtitutions intermarry, it would be thought more a miracle if they did not produce a living child among them at the twelvemonth's end, than that they ſhould produce many: what are commonly underſtood as miracles can ſcarcely be thought neceſſary to carry on the courſes of nature, or ſupply any defects in the proviſions made for them. We cannot well imagine a rod changed into a ſerpent, becauſe there were not ſerpents enow generated in the natural way, nor water turned into wine to prevent interruption in the innocent jollities of a wedding: ſuch motives muſt appear of too little importance and dignity to give motion to the arm of omnipotence.

Therefore we ſuppoſe none other intention of miracles than to work upon the minds of men: they were anciently called ſigns and wonders, their very name by its Latin derivation implies a thing to be wondered at, as the Greek term Thauma does a thing to be ſtared at, and

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they are frequently declared to have been performed for manifeſting the power of God. We may know likewiſe upon the authority of Saint Paul, if not by our own underſtanding, that the contemplation of viſible nature would lead to the knowledge of God if duly attended to, but men in general were ſo immerſed among ſenſible objects, and the purſuit of their pleaſures and private intereſts, that they could never riſe to a competent degree of that knowledge: ſo we may conclude the principal deſign of miracles was to ſupply the defect of clearneſs in their underſtandings. There may be another uſe of them for giving credence to expreſs meſſengers ſent upon ſome particular errand, but this relates only occaſionally to the perſons who were to receive the meſſage: ſo the general purpoſe of them remains none other than to impreſs a ſenſe of the being, the power, and dominion of God upon the hearts of mankind.

Therefore miracles were moſt plentifully employed in the earlieſt and ignorant ages, and have gradually decreaſed as men improved in obſervation and knowledge. The Angels converſed familiarly upon earth no longer than the patriarchal times, but afterwards appeared very rarely, upon ſolemn and extraordinary occaſions: Urim and Thummim ſcarce held throughout the Jewiſh monarchy: prophecy ceaſed upon the coming of Chriſt, and ſome doctors hold all other ſupernatural powers died with the

Apoſtles;

Apoſtles: at leaſt I may ſay, without offence in this land of freedom, there has been nothing of miracle, prophecy, or revelation for the laſt thouſand years, but we are left to the records of ancient days, and thoſe ſubject to many diſputations upon their authenticity. From this method of proceeding in the government of the moral world, we may gather that mankind in ſucceſſive generations ſtands leſs and leſs in need of ſigns and wonders; and what ſupernatural operation may ſtill be judged requiſite for us is diſpenſed by the ſecret imperceptible influences of the Comforter, promiſed to be our light and director.

But we are not to expect he will operate in a viſible ſenſible manner, nor to look for him in tranſports, and extaſies, and ſudden flaſhes of illumination. We are told his office lies in teaching us all things, but extaſy and tranſport are not methods of teaching: he conveys inſtruction to us through the channel of our own underſtanding, and what lights he vouchſafes to afford ſeem to us the diſcoveries of our own underſtanding. Wherefore it behoves us to make an honeſt, humble, induſtrious uſe of this faculty, upon which we may depend with more aſſurance than our forefathers, ſince we have the promiſe of ſo powerful an aſſiſtant to make up for its natural infirmities: and perhaps when he ſhall have finiſhed his work, even the remembrance of former miracles may be innocently

cently and harmleſſy dropped. Upon theſe conſiderations it muſt be acknowledged, that our cotemporary divines act prudently in being leſs copious upon thoſe topics than their predeceſſors, but applying themſelves principally to clear and open that channel by which alone we now receive our ſpiritual food, reſerving their externals for ſuch who could not otherwiſe be brought to that juſt and lively ſenſe of the divine dominion and attributes, and habitual dependence upon Providence, which are the grand ſources of human happineſs both in this world, and that which is to come.

CHAP. XII.

Grace.

ALTHOUGH our Church acknowledges miracles to be ceaſed, nevertheleſs I take it to be one of her principal doctrines, that the Spirit of God, or more properly God the Holy Ghoſt, does ſtill operate upon men, enabling them to diſcern truths and exert a vigour of mind in the performance of good works they could not have done by their natural powers. Nor is this a contradiction to the ceſſation of miracles any more than the doctrine of creating ſouls for children, becauſe ſuch aſſiſtance is ne-

ceſſary to work out our ſalvation: but we have ſeen before, that miracle is underſtood of ſigns and wonders whoſe principal uſe is none other than to ſtrike upon the ſenſes; whereas this ſupernatural operation is of indiſpenſible uſe, performed upon that account, and not as an evidence of any thing elſe, but itſelf requires other evidence to prove its reality.

I have nothing to do with the proofs of there being ſuch a divine interpoſition; thoſe I ſuppoſe muſt be drawn from the ſacred Scriptures, and left to the management of divines: no more belongs to me than to examine what we are to underſtand when we hear them talk of the grace of God, and tell us that no good thing can be done effectually without it: for it would be too haſty to reject, and of little ſervice to adopt, what they ſay, until we have gotten a competent knowledge of the matter alledged. Now to gain a clearer conception, and avoid the perplexities conſequent upon taking a ſubject too much in the groſs, let us conſider ſeparately the effect produced in the mind at ſeaſons of grace, and what cauſes may be ſuppoſed to produce that effect. But theſe too merit a diſtinct enquiry, yet are commonly blended together under the ſame term: for we ſpeak of a man having grace, which muſt denote the ſtate of his underſtanding and temper of his mind, or the degree of activity exerted, and of this being owing

owing to the grace of God, which muſt refer to the act of the donor.

2. Nobody can miſs obſerving what varieties there are in the clearneſs of his faculties and vigour of his ſpirits fitting him for any common buſineſs, profeſſion, ſcience, or enterprize he can undertake, more at one time than another. Sometimes he finds himſelf taſteleſs, inactive and dull, he ſtrives and toils without making any progreſs, all is taſk and burden and blunder, nor can he do his work to ſatisfy himſelf: another while he ſees every thing at a glance, his ſcenes appear full, his objects diſtinct and lively, he proceeds with eaſe and dexterity, his labour becomes an entertainment, he feels himſelf carried along by an impulſe almoſt whether he will or no. All this in times of ignorance and darkneſs was aſcribed to the heavenly powers: Apollo, or Hercules, or Mercury were invoked upon every important occaſion to lend their preſent aid according to the nature of the enterprize to be gone upon. And we ſtill figuratively, though not ſuperſtitiouſly, ſpeak of inſpirations almoſt as currently as the Ancients: the hero is inſpired with ardor in battle, the politician with ſchemes of public utility, the orator with eloquence, and the poet with enthuſiaſm; nor do we want to be taught the expedience of Horace's precept; Thou ſhalt do and ſay nothing againſt the good will of Minerva.

This particular aptitude for the work in hand we may reckon the genus, whereof grace, conſidered as an effect, is the ſpecies. We may ſometimes find our underſtandings clear to diſcern the ſubjects of divinity, to look forward into futurity, perceiving things there with the lively colours of preſent objects, having an unconfuſed though incompleat conception of Goodneſs, of Equity, of univerſal Providence, rejoicing in its protection, ſatisfied with its proceedings, earneſt to perform laudable actions, going through our duties with taſte and pleaſure: theſe I take to be the ſeaſons of grace. Then again we become cold and heavy, or dragged along forcibly by appetite and worldly purſuits, immerſed in temporal engagements, ſcarce able to raiſe a thought of any thing ſuperior to natural cauſes, backward to practiſe what we know, tempted to murmur, to deſpond, to doubt of the divine goodneſs, or think it of little avail to ourſelves: whenever this happens, we may look upon grace as withdrawn.

Thus the reality of the fact is certain beyond all denial: continual experience teſtifies, that there are ſuch variations as above mentioned in the ſtate of our underſtanding and alertneſs of our activity, which if any body ſhall chooſe to expreſs by ſome other term than grace, this makes no alteration in the caſe; for names cannot alter the nature of things, but they will be ſtill the ſame whatever denomination you rank

rank them under. Therefore the effects meant by thoſe who employ the word grace, and its efficacy, cannot be controverted; nor that we ſhall proceed to very little purpoſe in any exerciſes of Religion or morality, when we have it not in ſome meaſure upon us: ſo it remains to enquire what are the cauſes to which this effect may be owing.

We ſhall find nothing in experience or human reaſon to hinder, but that it may ſpring from the ſame ſources with the other effects of ſimilar kind taken notice of above: for we have the ſame lucid ſeaſons of comprehenſion, and energy of action come upon us to carry us through the functions of our profeſſion, our inveſtigations of ſcience, and even our amuſements: the enthuſiaſm of the poet differs nothing from the pious ardor of the ſaint in eſſence and quality, though it does greatly in value and importance. Yet thoſe are never now aſcribed to divine interpoſition, but deemed to proceed from the preſent ſtate of the brain, condition of the bodily humours, external encouragements, converſe with perſons of ſimilar turn, ſight of inviting examples, or other natural cauſes. Nevertheleſs the greater importance of religious inſpiration above all others makes a very conſiderable difference, and juſtifies us in aſcribing it, though remotely through a long chain of ſecond cauſes, to the act and purpoſe of God as a providential event. For we have ſeen in Chap. VI.

that although all things fall out by the divine proviſion, yet thoſe only wherein we can find ſome apparent benefit and viſible mark of goodneſs are to be eſteemed providential, and more ſo according to the greatneſs of the benefit diſcerned. Therefore we may deſervedly give this inſpiration the name of Grace, as a ſignal and ineſtimable favour to the receiver, the word being derived from a Latin term ſignifying Favour.

3. But though our almighty Governor wants neither power nor ſkill to compleat all his purpoſes, and effectually confer all his favours, by the wiſe diſpoſition of ſecond cauſes on their firſt eſtabliſhment, ſo as that both the natural and moral world may run on its deſtined courſe in every minute particular, without needing the further touch of his hand, yet on the other hand we have ſeen in the Chapter on Providence, there is nothing inconſiſtent with our ideas of the Attributes in ſuppoſing him purpoſely to have left room in the plan for his own interpoſitions at ſuch times as he judged proper: whence the effuſion of grace by ſupernatural operation carries no greater weight of improbability to be drawn up by poſitive evidence in the oppoſite ſcale, than what hangs to every fact whereof experience and reaſon can give us no aſſurance. So the field lies open to divines to produce what proofs they have in ſtore in ſupport of their alle-

allegation as of a credible point to which reaſon has no repugnance.

We may remember further as was remarked in the ſame Chapter, it is reaſonable to think that God has adapted his courſes of Providence to the condition and occaſions of his intelligent creatures, making the natural, the moral, and the ſupernatural ſyſtems, harmonize and mutually correſpond with one another: therefore the generality of mankind being ſo circumſtanced as that the thought of his dominion and ſuperintending Providence might be loſt without an opinion of his being preſent and directly operating among them, affords a degree of probability that he does ſo operate.

If the divines think this argument of any weight they are heartily welcome to it; the point it tends to confirm being of ſo great conſequence that a prudent man would be glad to give any helps which may be of ſervice. What though he can himſelf apprehend the moral world adminiſtred by a long complicated tiſſue of natural cauſes, reaching from the firſt eſtabliſhment of nature, he muſt be ſenſible that many cannot follow him in this thought: but it is of the utmoſt moment that they ſhould have a lively ſenſe of a Providence preſiding over their thoughts and actions, eſpecially thoſe relating to their ſpiritual concerns. Therefore the grand important point to inculcate is this, that grace comes from God, the manner how it

comes is rather matter of ſpeculation, unleſs ſo far as neceſſary to ſatisfy of the other: then let every man believe it to come in ſuch manner as he can comprehend, leſt if you diſturb him in this circumſtance, he ſhould not believe it to come from God at all.

4. Yet as the beſt things corrupted become the worſt, and the moſt ſalutary opinion may, by a little perverſion or extravagance, turn into a poiſonous notion; therefore it is of moſt dangerous tendency for a man to perſuade himſelf he perceives the divine interpoſition actually operating upon him. There are thoſe who fancy themſelves too cunning for the Spirit of God, he means to give his influences ſecretly, but they can find him out; they can ſee the flaſhes of illumination and feel the floods of inſpiration poured upon them immediately from the divine hand, they can give an exact hiſtory of all his motions from the very day and hour when he firſt touched their hearts, converting them from obdurate ſinners into the children of heaven. It were ſcarce credible, had we not examples among our cotemporaries, to what wild lengths of ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm theſe fancies will carry men: debaſing the Majeſty of God, creating ſpiritual pride, and a ſuperlative contempt of their fellow-creatures.

For though we know God is omnipreſent, alike powerful every where, and wants not largeneſs of intelligence to act in any one particular

cular place without diſregarding all others, yet this is by much too vaſt an idea for our comprehenſion: if we conceive him familiarly preſent and immediately operating upon ourſelves, we ſhall unavoidably fall into an apprehenſion of his being abſent or regardleſs elſewhere, and inſenſibly nouriſh a conceit of being peculiar favourites, but all others in a manner outlawed from his providence, to be regarded as aliens rather than compatriots. But there are degrees of extravagance, and I am apt to ſuſpect that many pious Chriſtians, eſpecially of the female ſex, though not running thoſe lengths, yet do a little ſurpaſs the bounds of moderation: therefore they can never be too much upon their guard againſt the notion of perceiving the immediate operations of the holy Ghoſt, whereinto they are unwarily drawn by a common figure of ſpeech, the Metonymy, of taking a cauſe for the effect.

In extraordinary events affecting the ſtate of kingdoms, or Religion, or private families, or particular perſons, we may be ſaid with propriety to ſee the finger of heaven, becauſe the natural cauſes which brought them about received their diſpoſition from the touch of that finger. We are very properly ſaid to receive our daily bread from the hand of heaven, becauſe the fertility of ſoils and induſtry of man, ſupplying plenty of bread to be found in every baker's ſhop, derived originally from that hand.

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So with the ſame propriety we may ſpeak of feeling the grace of God in our underſtandings and hearts, becauſe our Church inſtructs us to aſcribe it to his interpoſing among ſecond cauſes, yet without idea of an immediate operation at the inſtant time of feeling: for I apprehend the orthodox doctrine of grace carries no ſuch ſenſe.

We are taught upon a higher authority that the wind bloweth where it liſteth, thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but knoweſt not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit:——that is, If I may be admitted to offer an interpretation, in the pangs of a ſpiritual birth the patient ſenſibly feels the effects, but knows nothing of when, or in what part the touch was given. Or if I may preſume to illuſtrate further, I would compare the effuſion of grace to a plentiful ſhower in a dry ſummer: if you go out immediately, you will ſee the turfs ſtill ruffet, the leaves hanging lank, and the fruits wrinkled; but look again a day or two after, and every thing appears lively, vigorous, and flouriſhing. Therefore if a man, after long confinement to his bed by ſickneſs, ſhould, upon looking out at window, diſcover an unuſual verdure, he may conclude that it has rained, not that it actually does rain: ſo if, after a ſeaſon of thoughtleſſneſs, you perceive your underſtanding on a ſudden lively to diſcern, and your will vigorous to purſue heavenly

venly things, you may orthodoxly conclude there has been an effuſion, not that there is one now.

One way of grace coming is, we are told, by hearing; but when you are touched with a ſermon, the influence is tranſmitted to you through the natural channel of human eloquence: ſo the effuſion was never poured upon you at all, but upon the preacher ſome time before he compoſed the diſcourſe, which it may be was done a year ago. Well, but you have heard the ſame ſermon before without being affected by it in like manner, ſo the difference muſt be owing to ſome alteration in yourſelf: this I can eaſily believe, for I have myſelf read treatiſes of divinity, of metaphyſics, of mathematics, orations, hiſtories, tales, Homer, Virgil, and Milton, with very different degrees of emolument, taſte, and emotion. But if we are inſtructed to believe the particular affectingneſs of a religious diſcourſe proceeds from the workings of the Spirit, why muſt the operation exciting thoſe workings be inſtantaneous and immediate? The Spirit is the ſame God with him who eſtabliſhed the courſes of nature, and accompliſhes diſtant purpoſes ſurely by their mechanical motions: has he then in his perſon of the Spirit ſo little command over ſecond cauſes that he cannot prepare them in a manner to excite grace in the heart long after his operation ceaſes? but to have the work well done,

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must do it himself? Since then we cannot pretend to limit the power nor wisdom of the Spirit, and have found such mischief spring from an opinion of his immediate operations being discernible by the senses, it were much safer to entertain no such opinion.

5. The thought of a present Deity working upon us is an intoxicating thought; how much so ever it may sooth the young beginner at first, the indulgence of it is extremely dangerous: it is like a fatigued thirsty man putting his mouth to the brandy bottle, he may design only a moderate cordial, but can never be sure how much more than is good for him will not slip down his throat. Therefore as I did before in the Chapter on Providence, I shall now again recommend to every man to remove the finger of God from him, as far as he can without letting it go beyond the reach of his comprehension: if he believes the grace in his heart owing to a supernatural interposition of the Spirit, still he may place a line of second causes between the act of God and the effect he feels. By practice in any science or way of performance we strengthen our faculties, so as clearer to discern and readier to execute new matters of similar kind after a considerable intermission; and expertness, though gradually acquired, commonly shows itself compleat at some particular time: nor is it inconceivable that the divine interposition may work a like alteration in the faculties,

faculties, giving them a clearneſs and vigour not to be attained by natural means, but to lie dormant until the occaſion offers for uſing them. Therefore if any man muſt frame ſome particular imagination concerning the manner of the Spirit's working, which yet he might more prudently forbear, let him ſuppoſe it done by acting upon his organs in his ſleep, or at ſome former time when he did not perceive it.

Thoſe who have gone through a grammar ſchool, muſt remember that ſometimes, on the evening before a repetition day, they have ſtriven and toiled for ſeveral hours to get their taſk by heart, but to no purpoſe, being unable at bed time to repeat a ſingle ſentence right: nevertheleſs awaking in the morning they have often found it ready at their tongue's end, ſo that they could go through the whole currently without miſtake or heſitation. Now I do not offer this as an inſtance of ſupernatural grace, for it would be almoſt blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt to believe him employed in ſo trifling a ſervice as to help a ſchoolboy in ſaying his leſſon: I only mention it in order to introduce another caſe which may be thought worthy his aſſiſtance. Suppoſe then I had an intimate friend whom I greatly loved and eſteemed, but who had fallen into ſome groſs and fatal error on the fundamentals of Religion. After many unſucceſsful attempts to reclaim him, I wiſh to introduce an able divine, whom

I know

I know to be a man of ſound knowledge and judgement, better ſkilled in managing thoſe points than myſelf: but my friend has taken an utter diſtaſte to all parſons, and will not hear of one of them being brought to talk with him. What then have I elſe to do but wait upon the doctor, in order to gather ſuch information from him as I may employ afterwards myſelf in the beſt manner I am able? Accordingly I obtain a conference, and receive ſuch a ſcheme of argumentation as I think cannot fail of taking effect, if I could but convey it unbroken: but it is long, conſiſting of many particulars, and intricate; ſo as to make it difficult to be retained in mind without loſing any of that clearneſs of explanation and cloſeneſs of deduction wherein its efficacy muſt conſiſt. On coming home I endeavour to recollect what I had heard, and fix every thing upon my memory in the proper order and colours wherewith it had been delivered, but after many hours toil and labour, find I can make out nothing regular or ſatisfactory; ſo am forced, like the ſchool-boy, to go to bed in deſperation of doing any good: nevertheleſs in the morning I have the whole occurring to my thoughts ſpontaneouſly, in the full vigour and preciſion I could wiſh, and applying it immediately to my unhappy friend, thereby cure him effectually of his error.

Now

Now if I am perſuaded upon the authority of the Church, that the divine aſſiſtance muſt have been afforded to make me inſtrumental in the ſaving of a ſoul, when am I to believe the help was given? Surely not when I felt its effects in the morning, for there is no difficulty in reading the traces of one's memory when clear and vivid: this I can do by my own ſtrength without ſupernatural aid: it is no more than repeating the Lord's prayer, or any thing thing elſe one is familiarly acquainted with. Is it not more rational to ſuppoſe the Spirit aiding the preceeding day, while I took ſo much pains in a good work, without perceiving any progreſs made therein? but he knew, though I did not, that the pains then taken would, by his co-operating influence, caſt my mental organs into ſuch a ſtate, as that by their mechanical workings in my ſleep they ſhould range themſelves exactly in the order wanted, which they have a quality of doing, as has been remarked before in Chap. X. §. 4. of the firſt Volume.

6. For I take it likewiſe to be orthodox that the Spirit does nothing for us by himſelf, but only co-operates with our endeavours: we muſt try, or no effect will enſue; ſo the effect muſt appear to be produced by our own powers, and ſo indeed it always is, but with the ſecret influence ſupplying their inſufficiency of ſtrength. This excludes all ſpontaneous illuminations which we have done nothing ourſelves to procure, and

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all irreſiſtible grace forcing upon us againſt our Will. We may conſider further, that the Spirit does not act upon our bodily powers, he never invigorates our muſcles to give us more than human ſtrength, nor purges our optics to make us ſee objects in the dark: but confines his aid to helping us in our ſpiritual concerns by ſupplying us with grace.

Now though I have hitherto applied the term Grace, conſidered as an effect to clearneſs of apprehenſion and ſtrength to perform good works, in compliance with the current language, and to avoid the obſcurity ariſing from needleſs abſtractions, yet in ſtrictneſs theſe things are not grace itſelf, but the fruits of it. For piety and goodneſs, though beſt evidenced by good works, do not conſiſt in them: it is the diſpoſition and habit of the mind, properly termed grace, which makes a man good: and this he muſt have before he can perform good works, though he cannot know it himſelf without that proof. The grace is a permanent quality abiding with him in his ſleep, at his meals, his diverſions, at other times, when he has no opportunity of exerciſing it, and prior to the pious thoughts and actions which firſt warrant us to pronounce it ſubſiſting. But this grace was the effect of his former endeavours to attain it, aſſiſted by the Spirit co-operating with him at the time of exerting them: which endeavours

deavours muſt be repeated to acquire a habit, and ſo frequently prove ineffectual that he can never know they have ſucceeded, and conſequently can never know the Spirit has co-operated, until, upon ſubſequent trial, he diſcovers their effects after the operation has ceaſed.

Hence it appears from the nature of the thing, that the notion of diſcerning an immediate effuſion of the Spirit, or feeling the finger of God move upon our hearts, has no manner of foundation: for the impulſes of grace are nothing elſe than the ſpontaneous workings of a habit, or vigorous ſtate of our faculties, acquired by our own well-applied induſtry; nor have we evidence of any thing co-operating with that induſtry, either from experience or elſewhere, unleſs what can be drawn from the written oracles and arguments urged upon them. After full conviction worked upon a man this way, that no good thing, efficacious to ſecure his ſpiritual intereſts, can be thought or done without ſupernatural aſſiſtance, then indeed he may have experimental knowledge of the Spirit's co-operating, and feel the power of God upon his heart: becauſe he may experience effects which he is already perſuaded could not have been produced by his natural powers, without an additional ſtrength thrown into them by divine interpoſition.

7. Thoſe among us who pretend to extraordinary illuminations and ſupernatural powers,

may be perceived extremely willing to have them taken for divine teſtimonies to their doctrines and practices: but they do not reflect, as indeed they ſeldom do any thing with reflection, that herein they change their very nature, bringing them to rank under the claſs of ſigns and wonders, that is, direct miracles, worked not ſo much for their immediate uſes, as for manifeſtation of the divine power to ſuch as could not be made ſenſible of it any other way: whereas the aſſiſtance of the Comforter was promiſed for the neceſſary uſes of the receiver, nor can ſerve as a manifeſtation, becauſe not credited by the by-ſtander unleſs convinced before, of the power of God working this way, upon Scripture authority. The ſame authority indeed teſtifies that the Spirit did operate miraculouſly upon the apoſtles at the feaſt of Pentecoſt and upon ſeveral other occaſions: but this was for the introduction of a new Religion, ſince when, ſay our doctors, ſuch operations have totally ceaſed.

When were miracles ever employed for removing the corruptions of Religion ſince it has been an old one? Are our modern innovations of greater importance than the Reformation? Yet that work of God went on without ſigns and wonders, and ſtill continues going on, if we may gather from the very recent diſbandment of that body guard of Popery the Jeſuits. Our firſt reformers claimed no miraculous illu-

minations

minations not extraordinary powers, but could execute what work God in his wiſdom judged needful for them to do, with the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Comforter afforded to every pious Chriſtian ſeeking it honeſtly, diligently and humbly, not ſaying arrogantly within himſelf, God I thank thee that I am not as this publican.

However ſince it is in vain to reaſon with people who make a merit of deſpiſing reaſon, but they will continue obſtinate in holding the revival of miracles, I would wiſh them to be very careful in diſtinguiſhing the genuine from the ſpurious; for they may remember that, when God works his miracles, he permits other powers at the ſame time, not commiſſioned from him, to work theirs. When Moſes turned his rod into a ſerpent, the Egyptian magicians turned theirs into ſerpents likewiſe; while oracles were delivered forth from before the ark, the witch of Endor called up Samuel from the grave by necromancy: while Micaiah declared the word of the Lord, Satan knew whom to inſpire for Ahab to go up to battle againſt the Syrians: while Jeſus healed all manner of diſeaſes, the Devils could troop by legions into the body of a demoniac, and being driven from thence impel the ſwine by thouſands to run violently down a precipice into the ſea. Therefore thoſe who believe miraculous illuminations renewed among them, have re-

ſon to expect that deluſions will be intruded in their company: they know very well who can upon occaſion transform himſelf into an angel of light, ſo that the apparent operations of the holy Spirit may be counterfeit; for it is not unlikely that ſome Devil of perverſeneſs or vanity may work ſuch wonders, as will if poſſible deceive even the elect. They ought not then to be over haſty and confident of their inward feelings, but take Saint Paul's advice to try every ſpirit before they truſt him; and ſtudy calmly the doctrine of touches, that they may not be impoſed upon to miſtake the cloven foot, for the finger of God.

8. We may obſerve likewiſe, that there are means of grace, and ways of quenching the Spirit, and men are ſaid to grieve the holy Spirit: by theſe expreſſions ſome people are led inconſiderately to fancy themſelves of importance with God, as if they could merit his favour, or diſappoint him, as they pleaſed. But they muſt entertain a very unworthy opinion of him, as ſubject to human paſſions, to imagine they can ſtir up either fondneſs or vexation in him by any thing they do; ſuch imaginations may be indulged to perſons of groſs apprehenſion, who can riſe no higher than the ideas exhibited by one another, and can think of God no otherwiſe, than as a very good and powerful man, living ſomewhere above the clouds: but thoſe who pretend to more light than all the reſt of mankind,

mankind, ought to know that Grieving is an exoteric term deſigned only for the vulgar, to touch their affections with the ſuggeſtion of ingratitude to their protector and beſt benefactor.

The other phraſes of quenching the ſpirit, and uſing the means of grace, muſt relate to the ſpirit and grace in us, conſidered as an effect of ſome prior cauſe: for it cannot be conceived that the act of God may be fruſtrated, or rendered effectual by any thing of our doing. But we are to underſtand thereby, that any good diſpoſition of mind or vigour of reſolution we poſſeſs, here called grace and ſpirit, may be weakened or deſtroyed by our ill conduct or neglect: and were acquired by means of our own uſing, with the divine aſſiſtance co-operating, not acting as a diſtinct agent, but adding energy to the powers we exert. Therefore it behoves us to ſtudy carefully what are the means of grace, and practiſe them ſedulouſly, and we ſhall find they are ſuch as have a natural tendency to procure the temper of mind we deſire; for the Spirit of God does no more than aſſiſt nature where ſhe falls deficient, it never counteracts nor controuls her.

So then our buſineſs is to examine our nature, our wants and our powers, uſing our beſt reaſon for applying the one to the other:

the ſame meaſures of conduct will be expedient as if there were no ſupernatural interpoſition; the only, though very material difference this makes is in the ſucceſs, not the choice, nor the prudence of our proceedings. Only we muſt take care to inform our reaſon by what lights we can gather from any quarter, ſtill employing our judgement in chooſing our guides, interpreting their directions, and applying them to particular occaſions; and if we manage well and honeſtly in all theſe points, we may reſt aſſured both from reaſon and promiſe, that ſhould any further aſſiſtance be neceſſary, God will graciouſly afford it us in as ample a manner as he ſees requiſite.

CHAP. XIII.

Trinity.

WE come now to the moſt myſterious article of the Chriſtian faith, the hardeſt of digeſtion to the reaſoner, eſteemed moſt ſacred by the orthodox, and acknowledged incomprehenſible by both: which we are taught to regard as the grand fundamental of our Religion, to be received upon the word of God with a reverential awe and ſubmiſſion, not to be curiouſly pried into.

I have

I have ſometimes, in entering upon knotty enquiries, introduced them with an invocating prelude, to render the ſpirits more alert by entertainment, and draw attention to drier matters behind. But this is not a ſubject to be trifled with, nor disfigured by rhetorical flouriſhes. The ſpirit of ſolid reaſon, and the ſpirit of grace, will not be conjured down from above by invocations: they are to be obtained none otherwiſe than by application of the natural means for procuring them; truſting for the ſucceſs to the diſpoſer of all events, who beſt knows what human undertakings require aſſiſtance, or are of importance enough to receive it.

Thoſe natural means I take to be an honeſt induſtry, a ſincere deſire of doing ſervice, an unaffected humility, a becoming courage tempered with more than filial reverence, but clear of ſlaviſh fears, which would render all our powers uſeleſs. He that wrapped up his talent in a napkin, did it becauſe he was afraid: but the delivery of the talent is our proper call to the work that may be performed with it, for we have no ground to expect an extraordinary call manifeſted to our ſenſes upon any occaſion. Then let every man carefully ſurvey the talents entruſted with him, as likewiſe in what ſervice there appears a probability of ſucceeding, be it to ever ſo ſmall a degree: and this is the taſk he is called upon to finiſh.

Men in general have ſtrongly taken part on the ſide of orthodoxy or againſt it, they never enter upon a controverted point without a pre-contracted zeal either to maintain or overthrow it: this I have always induſtriouſly avoided, having never engaged in diſputes, and I hope given evidence of a neutrality or rather friendlineſs to both parties in the former courſe of theſe enquiries. I have no temporal intereſts to ſerve, no honours to expect, no vanity to gratify by fighting on either ſide: it is nothing to me whether the world be Chriſtian or philoſophic, further than as either may be really more conducive to preſent and future happineſs: I have already ſhown ſome practice in abſtruſe and knotty diſquiſitions, and ſome exerciſe in the methods of explanation and illuſtration; both which we ſeldom ſee the ſame perſon endeavour to unite, thoſe who think the deepeſt taking little care to expreſs themſelves cleareſt. Upon this ſurvey of my ſmall ſtock, I ſeem to myſelf not totally unqualified for my preſent enterprize, wherein if I can proceed with the natural means above-mentioned, I need not ſtand in terror of that power whoſe diſpleaſure is moſt to be dreaded, notwithſtanding the ſacredneſs of the ſubject. For I am ſure of finding, not only righteous judgement but mercy with him, and though I fail in the honeſt attempt, he will not be extreme to mark what is amiſs, but accept the will for the deed.

Before

Before the judgement ſeat of men, who are ever forward to judge another's ſervant without conſidering that to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth, I have leſs expectation of an acquittal: the man of zealous piety regards all examination of religious myſteries as a profanation, as a touching the ark of God with unhallowed hands; the man of reaſon looks upon every mention of them, otherwiſe than in the light of an exploded abſurdity or unintelligible jargon, as a certain mark of weakneſs in the intellects unable to throw off the impreſſions of the nurſe and the ſchoolmaſter. I have more reſpect for my fellow creatures than will ſuffer me to remain indifferent of their eſtimation, or not to wiſh for their favourable opinion; yet can bear the thought of hazarding their cenſure in proſecution of what to me carries the appearance of a duty. So ſhall go on my own way without trepidation, careful to offer nothing ſhocking either to Religion or reaſon, deſirous, not uneaſily anxious, to ſtand approved in the eyes of of others for the allowableneſs of my attempt, whatever they may judge of the ſucceſs.

But that they may not expect more than I have in my intention, I muſt remind them that, as in the articles hitherto touched upon, ſo in handling this, I ſhall not enter into the evidences of its truth and reality; for I do not apprehend it diſcoverable, or capable of being proved by the light of nature, nor does it become me

to

to decide upon the interpretation of texts alledged in ſupport of it: I am only to ſeek for a rational conſtruction of the doctrine taught as orthodox in the Church, ſo as to leave it a thing credible, but not to be credited without ſome more poſitive proof than that of reaſon having no repugnance againſt it. Such credibility ſurely cannot hurt the cauſe, for I preſume there is nobody now willing to cry out with Tertullian and Beveridge, I believe becauſe it is impoſſible: ſo this argument drawn from the impoſſibility may very well be ſpared without detriment to my compatriots, who ſeem rather a little too inclined to make their want of comprehenſion an irrefragable evidence againſt the truth of a fact.

But there are myſteries in viſible nature, in the impulſes cauſing gravitation and coheſion, in the vital circulations, in voluntary action carried on by inſtruments which we perceive not what they be, nor where they lie, nor with what limbs they connect: therefore there may well be myſteries in the divine nature. Nevertheleſs I am for leaving as little myſterious as poſſible, and though I muſt not expect to comprehend every thing it may be proper for me to admit, yet it ſeems rather commendable to comprehend as much as I can.

2. There is no occaſion to take pains in ſetting out the doctrine, we may refer to the three creeds appointed to be read in our Churches: the

the grand objection commonly made to them is, that they impoſe upon us the belief of three being one, which is contrary to the cleareſt principles of our reaſon. For numbers are the moſt diſtinct and ſteady of all our ideas; we know that a million and one is more than a million, nor find ourſelves liable to miſtake the one number for the other: but our knowledge of all other things ſo nearly proportioned to one another is inaccurate and fluctuating, unleſs where we can expreſs them by numbers. Therefore if we may not truſt our underſtanding in diſcerning the difference between one and three, it muſt loſe all credit with us whatever, nor can we truſt it to judge upon the arguments brought in ſupport of this very article: for I am not more ſure that I read the creeds in my common prayer book, nor that I know what they enjoin me to believe, than that one number is not another.

Now I ſhall not undertake to defend the point objected againſt, but muſt give it up as directly contrary to reaſon: the only queſtion is whether it is to be found in our creeds. Our divines, I dare anſwer, will none of them ſay that number three is number one: Athanaſius affirms no ſuch thing, for he tells us expreſsly that one God is not three Gods, nor are three Perſons one Perſon, and pronounces it a damnable hereſy to believe either. But this, ſay the objectors mends the matter very little, for if

there

there be three Perſons each of whom is God, there muſt be three Gods, for you will not pretend them to be component parts making up a God among them: on the other hand if there be one only God, there can be but one Perſon who is God. So the difference is only in words, and the poſition, we are enjoined under ſuch terrible threatnings to believe, remains the ſame in ſubſtance as that number three is number one: but it is impoſſible for us to believe contradictions, therefore inconſiſtent to admit any argument in proof of them, whether from authority or otherwiſe.

As to the impoſſibility of believing contradictions, I much queſtion the fact, and whether it would not puzzle the objectors themſelves to ſhew, either that nobody ever believed the Trinity, or that all who did, have underſtood it in a ſenſe that carries no contradiction: at leaſt I apprehend, that inſtances might be produced of mens holding contradictory propoſitions where the oppoſition was not very glaring, and upon matters whereof their ideas were a little obſcure and confuſed.

Many who think themſelves very knowing perſons, apprehend bodies to have an attractive or repulſive quality inherent in them: yet what is more contrary to reaſon than that a body ſhould act in places where it is not, or that action in the abſtract ſhould go out from the agent to operate at immenſe diſtances, large as

that

that from the Sun to the Earth? It was but the other day a friend of mine was accuſed of utter ignorance in phyſiology for maintaining that, upon the parts of a human body joining in vital union, there was not a new ſubſtance produced more than was exiſting before they came together: the corporealiſts univerſally, and I doubt not many orthodox Chriſtians, believe a man to be one individual ſubſtance having a perſonality not communicable to any other individual, yet that the many ſubſtances of his limbs and other parts are this individual; nay more, that after loſing a leg or an arm, he ſtill continues the ſame individual ſubſtance he was before. Now what is this, almoſt univerſal belief of an individual compound, better than believing that number ten thouſand is number one, and if you ſubſtract five hundred, the remaining nine thouſand five hundred is ſtill the ſame number one?

If we attentively obſerve the apprehenſions of the vulgar among us, I believe they will be found both Tritheiſts and Unitarians, though they do not know of their being the former: ſo are not diſturbed by the contradiction, nor driven to the dilemna of either dividing the ſubſtance, or confounding the perſons. They ſeem to apprehend the Son on coming down to earth, diſunited from the ſubſtance of his Father who remained behind at a diſtance in heaven: yet during that ſeparation retaining his divinity, and

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ſo being a diſtinct God. They apprehend him and the Spirit ſometimes poſſeſſing the Attributes as of their own nature, ſometimes ſubordinate to the Father, acting by his powers and under his direction; and this they conceive occaſionally according to what the other doctrines of Religion in their apprehenſion require: but as they do not much compare their ideas together, ſo neither do they perceive any diſcordance among them, ſuch being habituated to occur at times as are moſt ſerviceable for their preſent uſe. Therefore it is a very prudent and honeſt caution, to revere the myſtery without prying curiouſly into it, and you do them a real injury by putting them upon compariſons of their ideas, unleſs their Chriſtianity be a miſchief to them, which it might be ſomewhat difficult to prove: for you muſt either deprive them of the benefit received from that, or endanger their disbelieving the unity of God, that grand fundamental article both of revealed and natural Religion.

As for the pretence of this article being the foundation of ſpiritual tyranny, this is not true; for hiſtory and experience teſtify, that thoſe who have erected ſchemes of tyranny did not find it ſufficient for their purpoſe, but were forced to build upon additions of their own, ſuch as tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, the cuſtody of the keys: our modern ſeducers of the populace pretend to extraordinary illuminations,

peculiar

peculiar providences, and wonder working powers: and Mahometiſm, that religion propagated by the ſword, totally rejects the Trinity for this notable reaſon, becauſe there cannot be a ſon without a mother as well as father. Perhaps nobody was ever hurt barely by his reception of the creeds, how erroneouſly ſoever he may have underſtood them: it is the ſtir made about them that does the miſchief. Any ſpeculative point, as the individuality of compounds, or ſuper-addition of a new exiſtence upon their conjunction, might raiſe as great diſturbances as the diſputes between Athanaſius and Arius, if once warmly eſpouſed as a matter of ſtate, or taken up for a party diſtinction.

3. The ſcantineſs of our underſtandings and obſcurity of our ideas, occaſioned principally by the unſteadineſs of our language, (for we generally think in words) is ſuch, that every man who will pry narrowly into his own thoughts, may find many contrarieties among them: which he cannot get rid of when diſcovered, becauſe he cannot always know which to throw aſide, each being ſupported by evidence that its oppoſition to the other will not warrant him to reject. Nevertheleſs one ſhould chooſe to harbour as few inconſiſtencies as poſſible, and there is none ſo likely way to eſcape them, where the aſſurance on both ſides is ſtrong, as by examining the terms employed in expreſſing them, in order to find out ſuch expoſition as

may

may render them compatible with one another. Therefore the queſtion now before us depends upon the conſtruction of the expreſſions employed, and becomes reſolved into this other, namely, whether ſaying that three Perſons are one God, is the ſame as ſaying, that three Perſons are one Perſon, or three Gods one God; that is, whether the words uſed in the firſt propoſition be equivalent to thoſe ſtanding in the others.

Now I apprehend the unity of the Godhead is clearly enough underſtood on both ſides not to admit of a diſpute: ſo the only difficulty remains upon the word Perſon, which it is obvious muſt have ſuch an idea affixed to it, as ſhall not include the idea of ſubſtance, for elſe we ſhall never eſcape the contradiction of making number three to be number one. Perſonality, I believe, is univerſally aſcribed both by learned and ſimple to ſome one individual ſubſtance, whether compound or ſimple it is no matter here. I have endeavoured to ſhew in former Chapters, that it denotes a particular ſubſtance, indiviſible, not conſiſting of parts, nor communicable to any other; for I can never be you, how much ſoever I may be made like you, nor exiſt by your ſubſtance: ſo that every intelligent or perceptive ſubſtance, whether actually having perception or not, is a perſon, and every perſon a ſubſtance diſtinct from all others, and unchangeably that perſon.

Mr

Mr Locke places perſonality in conſciouſneſs, which he conceives may be annexed to a ſyſtem of matter, from whence we may conclude him to conceive that it may paſs ſucceſſively from one ſyſtem to another; and ſo indeed it actually muſt in the ſeveral ſtages of life, the material ſyſtem, as ſome believe, changing in us every ſeven years: but we can hardly ſuppoſe him ever to conceive it poſſible, that ſeveral conſciouſneſſes ſhould unite at the ſame time in any one ſyſtem or ſubſtance. So that upon all theſe hypotheſes the contradiction ſtill ſtares us in the face, for that three Perſons are one ſubſtance, comes out to be the ſame as that number three is number one.

But divines will aſk, who gave Mr Locke or you authority to ſettle our language for us? the term as ſeverally applied by you may be proper enough for your uſes: but is it an unprecedented thing for the ſame words to carry very different ſenſes in different ſciences? Then let the ſhoemaker keep to his laſt, and leave the interpretation of ſcripture doctrines to us, who have made it the buſineſs of our lives to underſtand them. Now I muſt acknowledge the reprehenſion juſt, for words being arbitrary ſigns may be affixed to any ſenſe for convenience ſake, and often take a very different currency in ſucceeding generations from what they had formerly, as perhaps will appear by and by to

be the caſe with the word at preſent in queſtion.

But by the way I muſt remark, that the words Perſon, Trinity, and Unity of ſubſtance are not ſcripture terms, but choſen upon human authority as the propereſt to expreſs the ſenſe of ſcripture. I do not object to them upon that account; for their long and general reception in the Church is a ſufficient evidence that they do contain the genuine ſcripture doctrine: ſo we do not cavil at the ſtile uſed, we only want to know in what ſenſe the word Perſon ought to be underſtood.

I do not remember to have met with any further explanation than that it is not to be taken in the common acceptation wherein we uſe it in diſtinguiſhing one man's perſon from another, by his having a body and ſoul, diſpoſitions and features, peculiar to himſelf. This is enough for the common believer, who being taught that the divine Perſons differ in another manner than human perſons, thereby eſcapes contradiction, though not obſcurity: which is a much leſs formidable enemy, as being more familiar among the ſhort-ſighted race of men. But thoſe who are uſed to lay their thoughts together will expect ſomething more explicit than this negative explanation: if they be content to take things upon very good authority without being able to comprehend the manner of their being effected, yet they will claim a right to be in-

informed intelligibly, what it is they are to believe: at leaſt they will be better ſatisfied if a conſtruction which may be clearly underſtood, can be given to the word Perſon, conſiſtent with the orthodox doctrines.

4. The Greek word for Perſon was Hypoſtaſis, which being uſed by Plato in ſpeaking of the Deity, induced many of the ancient Chriſtians to adopt his notions into their ſyſtem, the more readily becauſe their zeal made them deſirous of ſhewing that the Trinity was ſo rational a doctrine as to have been diſcovered by the human reaſon of Plato. Cudworth will not allow him the diſcoverer, but to have learned it from Pythagoras, and that it had probably been taught before by Orpheus: but when we reflect how apt Plato was to put things into the mouth even of his maſter Socrates which never were in his head, and how natural it is for each new philoſopher to improve largely upon the hints afforded him by his predeceſſors, we cannot depend upon the hypoſtatic doctrine being older than Plato himſelf. It would take up too much of my time, and perhaps might produce more perplexity than illuſtration, to hunt about for long quotations upon this matter: ſo I ſhall content myſelf with ſetting down ſuch conception of the Platonic opinions as remains with me from what little reading I have had in his dialogues, and Cudworth's intellectual ſyſtem: firſt premiſing ſome obſervations upon the man-

ner of human apprehenſion in general to render my account the clearer.

When we learn our accidence we are taught that a noun ſubſtantive is that which can ſtand by itſelf, whence we are eaſily led to imagine any thing we can expreſs by a ſubſtantive contains ſomething ſubſtantial, having an exiſtence independent of every thing elſe. Theſe ſubſtances indeed which have not a permanent application, muſt be excepted, but whatever we find convenient to diſtinguiſh conſtantly by one appellation, we account an exiſting ſubſtance; being too apt to take our own ideas, and the names we expreſs them by, for real eſſences of things. Thus when a carpenter has prepared the ſhelves and other parts of a bookcaſe, if he ties them up in a bundle for convenience of carriage, the bundle is no being different from what they were while ſcattered about his ſhop, becauſe he will unbind them again as ſoon as he comes to your houſe: but when he has faſtened them together properly with glue and nails, the bookcaſe begins to exiſt, and is eſteemed a new thing, having uſes and properties not to be found in the diſjointed materials.

A croud is no diſtinct exiſtence, becauſe it will diſperſe again preſently; but if the ſame people be erected into a corporation, there is a new exiſtence ſuperadded, and they become a Perſon in law capable to ſue and be ſued, to purchaſe chattels, grant leaſes, and perform many

many other acts of a ſingle perſon: therefore we ſay the Bank did not exiſt before King William's reign, nor the South Sea company before Queen Anne's, but they ſtill exiſt individually the ſame companies, although perhaps there are ſcarce any of the original members living. And there are folks who will battle with you tooth and nail, that when the King incorporates ſix hundred men into a regiment, there is a new being produced which was not exiſtent before, while the men were rambling at large about the country: and that this being would remain the ſame, although by deaths, deſertions and recruitings, every man in it were changed.

Since then we of this enlightened age are ſo prone to take a noun ſubſtantive for a ſubſtance, and place exiſtence in compoſition, incorporation, and regimentality; no wonder if heathen Plato, born almoſt in the infancy of philoſophy, ſhould miſtake his own ideas for real beings having a ſeparate exiſtence, independent on the objects from whence he drew them. Then ſince all things diſcover and diſtinguiſh themſelves to us by their forms and qualities, nor can we perceive or apprehend any thing totally diveſted of them, and ſince forms and qualities may be expreſſed by nouns ſubſtantive, he conceived them to have a reality and exiſtence of their own, independent on the ſubject wherein they were found: for the roundneſs in a piece of clay is a different thing from

the clay itſelf, and though there were no bodies in the world perfectly round, as perhaps there are not, ſtill there would be ſuch a thing as roundneſs in the abſtract, of which we can currently form an idea.

But all particular objects became what they are by the qualities reſiding in them, which conſtitute their eſſence; and upon being transferred to other objects, carry the eſſence along with them. Thus the piece of clay became round by the introduction of roundneſs into it, the merchants became a Bank and South Sea Company, and the ſix hundred fighting men a regiment, by having incorporeity and regimentality introduced among them: and if all the particles of the clay, proprietors of the companies, or men of the regiment were exchanged ſucceſſively for others, the rotundity, incorporeity, and regimentality, would be transferred to a new ſet of conſtituents, which would have the ſame eſſence that had belonged to the old ones. Yet Plato having a clearer head than our modern philoſophers, could diſtinguiſh quality from ſubſtance, and diſcern that quality cannot exiſt alone, but muſt reſide either in ſome object where we perceive it, or in the abſtractions of our own mind: and this it might do without confounding its particular exiſtence with that of the ſubject poſſeſſing it. For the ancients had a notion that one thing might inexiſt within another, ſtill retaining its exiſtence diſtinct from that:

that: thus the roundneſs inexiſts in the clay, and the thought of it inexiſts in my underſtanding; yet roundneſs is not clay, nor underſtanding, neither are clay and underſtanding roundneſs. And they conceived further, that each quality wherever reſiding, though in a thouſand places at once, was ſtill numerically the ſame: for if you and I look upon a thouſand marbles, the rotundity in them all, and the rotundity remaining in our memory after we have turned our backs upon them, is one and the ſame individual exiſtence.

Nevertheleſs Plato gave the preference to quality above ſubſtance, as being more ſtable and ſteady, for ſubſtances fluctuate without ceaſing, perpetually changing their eſſences, becoming this thing or that according to the qualities infuſed among them: but qualities muſt always remain the ſame they ever were, in whatever ſubject reſiding. A beautiful young lady, if ſhe lives long enough, perchance may grow ugly and old: but youth can never be anility, nor beauty become uglineſs. A colt may grow to be a horſe, and afterwards made a gelding: but colteity, horſeity and geldingeity, muſt always continue themſelves, in whatever beaſt inexiſting. A mob of ſturdy gypſeys, when men are ſcarce, may be preſſed into a regiment: but gypſeity and regimentality can never be turned into one another by all the powers of nature or royal prerogative.

5. From hence he inferred, that qualities were unchangeable, eternal, and uncreated, incapable of loſing their eſſence into whatever ſubjects they migrated, or of ſuffering diminution upon being diſperſed into ever ſo many: for there muſt have been ſuch a thing as roundneſs in the abſtract from everlaſting, it could not but be, and whether inexiſting in clay or marble, in our memory or meditation, it can never change into ſquareneſs or gibboſity or whiteneſs, or ſoftneſs, or any other quality, but muſt always continue invariably itſelf; and loſes nothing of its reality and exiſtence in one ſubject, by being communicated to millions beſide.

But here a queſtion will naturally occur, that ſince qualities have had an eternal duration, yet cannot exiſt alone without ſome ſubject wherein to inexiſt, where could they find ſuch receptacle for their inexiſtence before there were any bodies to concrete with them, or intelligent creatures to receive them in the abſtract? To this it was readily anſwered, that they exiſted in God, whoſe uncreated ſubſtance might well afford them an eternal duration: for God is unchangeable, without beginning, in all his Attributes, having had nothing to learn from everlaſting; therefore every thing known or knowable muſt have been perfectly known to him from all eternity, and in his knowledge the things ſo known did from all eternity inexiſt. That theſe ideas in the divine mind were the

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archetypes from whence all forms in bodies, and ideas in the human mind were taken, in a manner analagous to an impreſſion made upon wax with a ſeal, which may communicate its figures without parting with them, or diminiſhing any thing of the originals engraven upon it.

It is not eaſy to account this way for the ideas of pain, uneaſineſs, ignorance, doubt, error, malice, ſelfiſhneſs and paſſion, too frequently inexiſtent in the minds of men, nor whether Plato ſuppoſed them too impreſſions taken from archetypes exiſting eternally in the divine mind: perhaps he would have ſaid, they were only negations of their oppoſite qualities: but let him look to that, it is not my buſineſs to defend his ſcheme, I am only a reporter.

To go on then with our philoſopher; as we have but one underſtanding to contain all that multiplicity of ideas and abſtract eſſences inexiſtent in it, ſo the divine underſtanding is one, and the ſame throughout that infinitude of knowledge whereto it extends. But underſtanding alone can produce nothing without ſomething elſe to employ it: for we find by experience that we can bring no work to perfection meerly by underſtanding it, but there muſt be other cauſes to co-operate with the ideal, or they will reſt in empty ſpeculation: and after all our refinements we can form none other conceptions of God, than what are built upon ſuch

little

little likeneſs as we can find of him in his image, the human ſoul.

Accordingly Plato, obſerving that we muſt have a motive or diſpoſition of mind to ſet our underſtanding at work, and a volition or power to make it take effect, before we can execute what we know, aſcribed three ſimilar principles to the divine nature: the firſt he called To Agathon or Goodneſs, the ſecond Nous or Intelligence, and the third Pſyche or Activity: and conceiving our knowledge of objects to be a voluntary act of the mind, not a paſſive perception, he ſuppoſed this muſt likewiſe have a motive to give it birth; therefore Nous was generated by To Agathon, and from theſe two proceeded that exertion by which all things were created and formed.

It remained to find a general name for theſe three principles; Quality would not do, becauſe the ideas and abſtract eſſences inexiſted in the Nous, and though qualities may co-exiſt together in the ſame ſubject, as ſquareneſs, yellowneſs and ſoftneſs in wax, yet they cannot inexiſt in one another, for yellowneſs cannot be ſoft, nor ſquareneſs yellow: nor could ſubſtance be the term, for then they muſt have been component parts of the To On or divine ſubſtance, which would have deſtroyed the unity of the Godhead, becauſe ſubſtances cannot inexiſt in any thing, much leſs co-exiſt in the ſame ſubject. Therefore he ſtiled them Hypoſtaſes or

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Subsistences, which is something between substance and quality, inexisting in the one, and serving as a receptacle for the others inexistency within it. Thus here was a Trinity in Unity, consisting of three co-eternal, co-equal, co-infinite Hypostases inexisting in the To On, the one undivided substance. I do not recommend this explanation to any body, as being not quite sure of understanding it myself; and Cudworth owns the Platonic was not exactly the same with the orthodox Christian Trinity, though much nearer to it than to Arianism: but I have never yet happened to meet with any other light attempted to be thrown upon the word Hypostasis.

As to the Oeons, which Cudworth tells us were holden by some people, they will not help us at all; for Oeon or Aion is only a Greek word for Eternal, which being an adjective has not the least pretence to be taken for an hypostasis or even an existence, and we shall be never the wiser for being told that there are several eternals in the divine substance: besides that Athanasius positively declares, there are not three eternals, but one eternal.

6. Having had so little success with the Greek, let us try what can be done upon the Latin word Persona: for we may presume the Latin fathers understood the sense of their Greek cotemporaries, and chose a term whereinto Hypostasis might be properly translated without losing

loſing any thing of the original uſed before in the Church. And we may with better reaſon expect to find this word intelligible, becauſe not a ſcripture term, but pitched upon as expreſſive of a ſcripture doctrine: but when men change the terms wherein things have been delivered, and go to expreſs another's ſenſe in language of their own, it is to be preſumed they will employ terms familiar to the hearer, which might make that clear to his apprehenſion, they had judged obſcure before: eſpecially if the word they uſe be found to have had a current ſignification, one can ſcarce imagine they would employ it in any other which muſt render it equivocal, when they were not pinned down to that by authority in excluſion of other terms leſs liable to miſapprehenſion.

Now Perſona ſignified originally a vizard uſed by the Roman actors upon the ſtage, it was made hollow and big enough to contain the whole head of the actor, and was ſhaped and coloured as near as could be gueſſed to imitate the features and complexion of the perſon he was to repreſent: ſo that if you were well acquainted with Oedipus, or Atreus, or Priam, from pictures or ſtatues of them extant, you might immediately know which of them you were to imagine ſtanding before you, as ſoon as Roſcius entered, before a word was ſpoken. Therefore Perſona is the ſame as Character, a very different thing from Perſon in the Engliſh

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ſenſe of the word, for Garrick is ſtill the ſame perſon whether in the character of Lear, or Richard: and though we ſometimes ſay, In the perſon, this is only a contraction of the ſentence which would run at length, in repreſenting the perſon of Lear. For the very perſon of Lear cannot be introduced upon the ſtage, or if he could he might then ſpeak for himſelf without wanting any body to ſpeak for him: nor do the audience ever imagine Garrick to loſe his own perſonality, for then they would not applaud him for imitating ſo truly the geſtures, the countenance, the tenor of voice ſuitable to the character he repreſents, all which would flow naturally from the real perſon without any ſkill or art to produce them.

I would gladly have forborn mingling theatrical ideas among our meditations on ſo ſacred a ſubject, but it was not eaſy to avoid them in explaining a term derived originally from the ſtage. Yet there is no neceſſity the word ſhould always carry preciſely its firſt ſignification; we find the contrary in human tranſactions: a man may act in ſeveral characters yet without aſſuming thoſe that are counterfeit; if he be inveſted with authority, he may ſtill behave with familiarity and freedom among his friends in his private character, but always keep a diſtance and dignity when acting in his character of a magiſtrate, and may inſtruct his family or intimates with what decorum and forms of reſpect

to

to appear before him in the exercises of his office. Our laws consider a justice of peace or a constable as different persons in the execution of their authority, and in their private dealings: the same treatment which would be no offence against the one, is an indictable misdemeanor against the other.

Therefore it would be blasphemy to imagine God counterfeiting the character of any other: if he acts in several, he acts always in characters peculiarly his own, incommunicable to any creature. I have before found it convenient to apprehend him under two characters, in a Chapter of the second Volume bearing that title: wherein he is distinguished into the Creator and Governor of the universe, one producing substances with their primary properties, and constituting the nature of things, the other directing his measures thereby so as to produce all the good possible thereout: the one enacting laws which are binding upon the other.

I had nothing then in my thoughts relative to the subject in hand, but was led into the notion by the difficulties occurring from the mixture of evil interspersed in the world, upon which I imagined we might satisfy ourselves the easier by considering him as two distinct persons, two in conception only, but in reality one. I shall not take this for a foundation to build upon, being only my own imagination which any body may follow or not as he finds most convenient

nient for his own use: and perhaps contains nothing similar to the Trinity, or if it does, the Governor must include all the three Persons, yet not confounding them with one another, but without observing their distinction. Nevertheless having hit upon a distinction of characters, I began to think it might serve as a clue to lead me further than I then had occasion to go: and having exercised my thoughts that way, has probably been helpful to me since I applied them particularly to the subject before us, by bringing them to fall readier into their present train, which I shall now endeavour to draw out to view.

7. In the Chapter of Providence I have shewn it agreeable with our ideas of the Deity to imagine that he might once for all have given his work of universal nature so perfect a constitution as that it might have run on its appointed course for ever, without needing any further application of his power: on the other hand, that it was not inconsistent with those ideas to suppose him purposely to have framed his laws of nature in such a manner as to require his own interpositions, which were not sudden expedients to correct unforeseen deficiencies in his design, but predetermined, and comprized in the original plan together with the operations of second causes.

Having thus found the divine interposition alike probable in theory both on the negative and

and affirmative ſides, I proceeded to examine whether it might be determined by the contemplation of viſible nature, and could find no evidence of an interpoſition later than the formation of the planetary ſyſtem, and this earth we inhabit: ſince when, ſo far as the eye of human reaſon can diſcern, all things both in the natural and moral world have gone on by the ſtated rules governing the motions of bodies, and actions of free agents. Nevertheleſs the field ſtill remains open for ſuch evidence as can be produced of further interpoſition, and it becomes us to give the divines a fair hearing of ſuch evidence as they do produce. It is not my buſineſs to examine the weight of their evidence: I have taken no more upon me than to attempt a clearer underſtanding of what they ſay, than hitherto has been commonly had, ſo that we may comprehend what it is we are to receive, or reject.

They tell us that God created the matter, and gave the form of this viſible nature we behold: thus much we knew before. But they tell us likewiſe, that he has interpoſed many times ſince by miracles, prophecies, and revelations, that he united himſelf to one particular man, ſo as to become the ſame perſon with him from his birth, that he frequently co-operates with our endeavours to diſcover truths, and perform good works we could not have done without ſuch aid, that theſe operations were

were performed by three Perſonæ in one God, not jointly, but each having a diſtinct ſhare of them: the union with manhood and all done in virtue of that union was the work of the Son, the aſſiſtance afforded occaſionally to men in general was the province of the holy Spirit, and all the reſt of the Father.

By theſe diſtinct manners of operation God appears to act in three characters, eaſily ſeparable from one another in our conception, but joining mutually in advancement of the general deſign, and executing the principal ſtrokes in the plan of Providence reſpecting the moral world. The Father acted in the character of King or Governor, controuling the courſes of nature and actions of ſecond cauſes by immediate exertions of his power, and by his ſigns and wonders prepared the minds of men for reception of the benefits imparted from the other two. The Son acted in the character of a co-agent or partner, not controuling the mental or bodily powers of Jeſus, but adding a force and vigour which could not have been furniſhed by natural cauſes: ſupplied what had been left deficient in the plan of Providence, and rendered mankind capable of reaping advantage from the effuſions of the holy Spirit. This laſt acts in the character of a friend and monitor, not working with the power and majeſty of a monarch, nor dwelling inſeparably with the mind of man, but imperceptibly

throwing in assistance from time to time, as wanted, and thereby filling up the last lines in the divine plan.

8. For the effects of the union between God and man, I shall have occasion to consider them more particularly in another Chapter, to be entitled on the Redemption: I need here only offer my idea of the union itself. Our common notions of unity seem very confused and variable: whatever collection hangs long together without being visibly disunited, or changed in its constituent parts, and all that time bears one name, we esteem one thing. The whole composition of a man, blood, bones, skin, hair, nails, we stile an individual, and apprehend to be one substance, one existence: if he lose a leg or an arm, if he grow fat till his girdle will not half come round him, if he cut his hair, and pare his nails, and they grow again, if every particle in his body be changed by perspiration and nourishment, still it is the same individual substance. But whoever will reflect steadily on the nature of substances must see, that they can never change into one another, however one may be substituted in the place of another, without perceiving it: nor can any two, how closely soever placed, or in what manner soever joined together, become one, but must remain numerically distinct, though we may not be able to distinguish them by our senses, nor separate them by any experiment.

And

And the caſe is the ſame with ſubſtances of different natures; for a ſpirit can no more become a body, or body a ſpirit, nor both together make one individual ſubſtance, than two bodies can: therefore to ſay, that God was changed into man, or man into God, or that both united made one perſon in the modern philoſophical ſenſe of the word, is as flat a contradiction as that number two is number one. So that we muſt not underſtand the hypoſtatic union of a conſubſtantiality, or numerical identity between God and man; nor does the Church affirm any ſuch thing, but teaches us to look into ourſelves for an explanation of her meaning; as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man, ſo God and man is one Chriſt.

Now let us conſider in what manner our ſoul and body is one, and we ſhall find it to be not by converſion of ſpirit into body, but by taking body into a participation of functions with ſpirit: not by confuſion of ſubſtance, but by unity of perſon. For perſonality belongs in property to ſpirit alone: body has none of its own, but aſſumes a borrowed perſonality from the particular ſpirit whereto it is vitally united. If the ſpirit of Euphorbus migrated into a cow, then into an eagle, and afterwards Pythagoras, ſtill it was the ſame perſon in all migrations: and if the cow ſuffered for the faults of Euphorbus, here was no injuſtice done,

becauſe the party offending bore the puniſhment. So if the ſubſtance of your arm ſhould by ſucceſſive change of particles have become the ſubſtance of mine, which is not impoſſible to have been the caſe conſidering the daily fluctuation both of our humours and ſolids, during its reſpective union with either of us it partakes of our perſonalities, and all the good and evil deeds performed by it were your, and my deeds.

Let us now apply this to the hypoſtatic union, wherein though we muſt underſtand perſonality in another ſenſe, as importing character inſtead of numerical identity, yet the manner of union will remain the ſame: for the character of moral wiſdom, innocence, and force to reſiſt all pain, terror and other temptations, belonged ſolely to the Deity; no human ſoul could act up to it; until the manhood being taken into God, that is, God being pleaſed perpetually to ſupply what was wanting in human nature, Jeſus was united to the Son, which together became one Chriſt; whoſe whole conduct was of a piece throughout, running in one conſtant tenour and character, and his actions were thoſe of the united agency. For all the acts of Jeſus were acts of the Son, and the Son performed nothing but by the inſtrumentality of Jeſus: as the ſpirit of a man performs nothing but by the inſtrumentality of his bodily powers.

9. As

9. As to the terms employed to expreſs the origin of the two Perſonæ from the Firſt, we muſt not expect to learn any thing from them concerning the manner of their riſing: for Begotten cannot be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe wherein we uſe it upon all other occaſions, and Proceeding is too general a term to afford us any light. We all proceed from the loins of Adam, the waters of a river proceed from its ſources, diſeaſes proceed from intemperance, wars and diſturbances from the ſelfiſhneſs and vanity of mankind, the traveller to France proceeds from Canterbury to Dover, the ſchoolboy proceeds from Latin to Greek. Beſides, Proceeding is not a ſcripture term, and if Begotten had been applied to the Spirit who drew his origin from the other two Perſonæ jointly, it might have raiſed as groſs ideas, as Biſhop Lavington has charged upon the Gnoſtics. Therefore the Church found it neceſſary to take a different term, and probably choſe one of vague and indeterminate ſignification, to expreſs a matter whereof they could give no clear and accurate deſcription.

The word Begotten we find often employed n Scripture, but even there it is uſed figuratively, not as expreſſive of the Son's exiſtence, but belonging originally to the man Jeſus, whom Saint Luke proves to be the Son of God by deriving his genealogy from Adam, which

was the Son of God. In this ſenſe we are all ſo too; for though we cannot trace our genealogy, there is no doubt of our being lineally deſcended from Adam which was the Son of God. But Jeſus was called by way of eminence the Son of God, and the Son of Man, as being the promiſed ſeed appointed by particular deſignation of Providence to reſtore the whole race of men from their fallen ſtate of perdition. The Scripture abounds in figurative expreſſions taken from the Aſiatic pinguid ſtile, many of them very different from thoſe current among us, and therefore appearing forced, harſh and enigmatical: nor perhaps has there been a more plentiful ſource of error and perplexity in Religion than the interpretation of figures either by taking them literally, or expecting too cloſe a reſemblance, or that the ſimilitude muſt always be the ſame in different caſes whereto they are applied.

The ſame figure of begetting is applied variouſly to both natures of Chriſt: ſometimes he is derived from God through the medium of Adam, ſometimes ſaid to be conceived by the virgin Mary of the Holy Ghoſt, ſometimes called the only begotten, and ſometimes the firſt born of every creature; which cannot be underſtood here of being our elder brother by adoption, unleſs you will ſuppoſe every creature without exception to rank among the

adopted.

adopted. For the purpoſe of the Scriptures was not to inſtruct men in metaphyſical ſubtilties, but by proper application of the figures familiar among the Jewiſh populace, to fix their expectation of a deliverer and teacher upon the perſon of Chriſt, and thereby prepare them for a reverential and willing reception of his doctrines.

Nevertheleſs ſince the gap deſignedly left in the plan of Providence, making room for the lapſe of man and entrance of ſin into the world, gave birth to the office of a Chriſt, which elſe could have had no functions to execute, therefore it may be ſaid, even in modern propriety of language, that the ſecond Perſona was generated by the firſt. And ſince the ſame circumſtance of the original deſign, together with the benefits worked out for the race of men in general, gave occaſion to the aſſiſtance requiſite for bringing particular perſons within the reach of thoſe benefits; therefore it may be ſaid with like propriety, that the third Perſona proceeded from the other two.

10. According to the diſtinctions of Perſonæ and offices above laid down, we muſt aſcribe all miraculous works to the Father, to whoſe operation muſt be referred that illapſe of a bodily ſhape in the manner of a dove at Jordan, and the cloven tongues appearing at the feaſt of Pentecoſt; which were ſent for ſigns and teſtimonies to the by-ſtanders rather than for imme-

diate uſe of the perſons on whom they deſcended: for we can ſcarce imagine the ſecond Perſona wanted any aſſiſtance to perform his office; nor is the office of the third any other than to confer grace, not to teach men languages. And though Saint Paul mentions various gifts of the Spirit, among which he reckons miracle and prophecy, yet if we will keep our thoughts diſtinct and clear, we can attribute only the proper management of them to the Spirit, but the gifts themſelves to the Father: and the calling them gifts of the Spirit might be ſolely in compliance with the Jewiſh language, who uſed from ancient times to ſpeak of propheſying and performing mighty works by the Spirit of the Lord, long before the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed.

So likewiſe we may ſuppoſe Chriſt worked miracles as Moſes and the prophets did, by the power of the Father accompanying him, not imparted to him: for one can hardly imagine a power given to a man to operate as a ſecond cauſe in ſtopping the diurnal rotation of the Earth, when Joſhua ſaid, Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon; nor that the bodily powers of Jeſus ſhould be made inſtrumental in rectifying the optics of a man born blind. Neither did Chriſt himſelf claim the powers he appeared to exert as his own, but aſcribed the glory of them to the Father: he ſaid, My Father worketh and I work;

work; his own ſhare was no more than to diſcern the proper times when miracles would be worked, and to call for them as occaſion required. The office of the Perſona reached only to the faculty of Volition, for we may ſee by the ſtruggles in what is called the laſt agony, the little fluctuations of counſel juſt before being betrayed, and the laſt pathetic exclamation upon the croſs, that natural cauſes were left to take their ordinary effect upon the imagination of Jeſus: ſo that we may conclude he had the ſame aſſaults of paſſion as we have, but never was overcome by them, and was in human infirmity and in all other things like unto us, ſin only excepted.

But the Scripture blends and mingles ideas of the different Perſonæ together; Chriſt is ſaid to be conceived of the holy Ghoſt, to be led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs, to grow in grace and favour both with God and man, to caſt out devils by the Spirit of the Father; and the calumniating that power in him ſeems to be called blaſpheming againſt the holy Ghoſt. The new birth is properly the work of the Spirit, and all ſupernatural application upon the hearts of particular perſons belongs peculiarly to his office: yet it is ſaid of thoſe who love Chriſt, that the Father and he will come unto them and make their abode with them; and our Church tells us, that upon receiving the ſacrament devoutly,

voutly, we dwell in Chriſt and Chriſt in us, we are one with Chriſt and Chriſt with us. So that it is neither neceſſary upon all occaſions, nor practiſed by the beſt authorities, to diſtinguiſh exactly between the acts of the ſeveral Perſonæ.

11. The name Chriſt is the ſame as Anointed, which term is likewiſe applied to the reception of the holy Ghoſt, ſometimes called a Chriſm or Unction. This name doubtleſs was choſen as being familiar to the Jews in order to lead them by their expectation of a temporal king ſtiled by them the Lord's anointed, to attend to the promulgation of a new law.

For the like reaſon we may preſume the other appellation of Word or Logos employed, becauſe the Jews by a Metonymy common among them, called a thing promiſed the Promiſe or Word given: ſo this appellation implied no more, than that Jeſus was the perſon of whom all former prophecies had given aſſurance that he ſhould come for deliverance of mankind from the evils oppreſſing them. But being frequently applied to Chriſt as a title or proper name, has induced many to believe it contained ſomething myſterious, expreſſive of certain qualities or powers peculiar to him: and becauſe Logos ſignifies either a word ſpoken or the faculty of reaſon, they conceived of the Word as ſomething analogous to the Nous or ſecond Hypoſtaſis of Plato, and made the Perſona to whom

whom it belonged the Demiourgos or maker of the world; confirmed herein by an expreſſion of Saint John's, By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made,

I am not theologian enough to undertake the expoſition of that text: perhaps it may mean that the whole plan of Providence was formed with a reference to the part he ſhould act in it, and without ſuch reference not a ſingle ſtroke was drawn of all thoſe intricate multitudes that were drawn. But I believe now the literal ſenſe is not holden orthodox, at leaſt I have not happened to meet with any perſon of repute in the Church underſtanding it ſo ſince Beveridge, who might be as good a man as ever lived, but certainly not the moſt judicious. To the beſt of my apprehenſion, God appears to have acted in his character of the Father when he made all things: we are taught in the Apoſtles creed, to believe God the Father almighty maker of Heaven and earth; and in the Nicene, to believe him maker of all things viſible and inviſible; that he made them in wiſdom I do not doubt, but that wiſdom ſhould be an agent or efficient cauſe of all the material particles falling into their proper ſtation, I cannot comprehend.

In the other ſenſe of Logos, as taken for a word or command, it ſeems as little capable of being an efficient cauſe as Wiſdom: nor yet do

I ſee

I ſee any neceſſity to underſtand by God's ſaying, Let there be light, that he pronounced an audible voice, or iſſued any command at all. What I ſhould imagine intended by that ſublime manner of narration was to expreſs that the acts of God are not operoſe, nor performed by degrees, as are all performances of man; who muſt put his materials in order one by one, and do half his work before he can finiſh the whole: but that upon the firſt exertion of omnipotence, light inſtantly ſprang forth, not like the dawn of day by gradual encreaſe, but in full perfection at once.

I have promiſed to build nothing upon Hypotheſis, or elſe I could find a way to make the word avail as a cauſe, by help of the Mundane Soul: who pervading intimately all the particles of a Chaos, and being active throughout in every part, might bring them into that arrangement we call the order of nature, compound them into elements, and give them the motions requiſite for bringing forth all thoſe productions we ſee generated, yet could not proceed to action without a command given, and a plan aſſigned from above of the meaſures expedient to be taken. Upon this ſuppoſition God may be ſaid to have made all things by his word as an operating cauſe, that is, by communication of his plan and declaration of his Will to the Mundane Soul: as a man builds a houſe by his inſtructions and orders given to the

the maſon and the carpenter. Yet even here the Word would not be an efficient, but an authoritative and directive cauſe: and God muſt be eſteemed to act in his character of Father, the ſupreme omniſcient Monarch of the Univerſe, not as the Son in the character of an aſſociate united to ſome created mind, keeping the Will invariably in a conſtant courſe of rectitude.

12. The divine Attributes aſcribed by Athanaſius to the Perſonæ muſt be underſtood of the Godhead; for they were all the ſame almighty, eternal, uncreated Being acting in ſeveral capacities: and it is remarkable he has ſaid nothing of Omnipreſence and Omniſcience, which can hardly belong to them all in their diſtinct perſonal character. The Son is deſcribed capable of loco-motion; he came down from heaven, deſcended into hell, roſe again and re-aſcended into heaven: while upon earth he was confined to the body of Jeſus, moving to and fro with that, preſent and abſent where that was either. During the day and two nights of his continuance in hell, God acted not in the filial character any where upon earth: and in his character of the Spirit, he acts or is preſent no where unleſs in the minds of men.

As to the Omniſcience, this makes no part of the Filial character: Chriſt himſelf diſclaims it, attributing to the Father what extraordinary knowledge he had more than a human under-

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ſtanding might have attained, whoſe improvement had been in no ſingle inſtance neglected; for the Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do, who ſhoweth him all things that himſelf doeth. And leaſt we ſhould underſtand this of all things without exception, he declares expreſsly that he did not know the day and hour of the laſt judgement.

Then if we apply Eternity to the diſtinction of Perſons, and ſay that God has from everlaſting acted in the three ſeveral characters; beſides that we ſhall make three Eternals, for though but one eternal God or Being, yet there would be three eternals, that is, eternal perſons, this would infer an eternity of the Creation too: becauſe we can ſcarce imagine God to aſſume characters before there were objects for him to act upon in them: ſo the generation and proceſſion could not take place until there were at leaſt in deſignation, a race of lapſed and imperfect creatures needing an atonement and continual aſſiſtance to reſcue them from perpetual miſery. From whence it will further follow, that the Univerſe, upon the whole, has continued for ever in the ſame ſtate, the ſeveral parts changing in a perpetual rotation; ſo that there has always been ſomewhere or other a fallen world to be the theatre whereon God might operate in his three diſtinct characters: and all the texts expreſſing a diſtinction of the Son from the Father

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before the world was, will be ſo many ſcripture proofs for the exiſtence of worlds prior to that uſually underſtood by the name.

And for the poſſibility of the created univerſe with all the ſubſtances contained in it being eternal, thoſe who hold the eternity of the Perſonæ have leaſt cauſe of any to boggle at it, for whatever he meant by begetting and proceeding, it muſt be acknowledged the Father was the ſubſtantial and efficient cauſe of the Son, and the Spirit: if then they were co-eternal with him, it follows, that an effect may be as old as the cauſe, poſteriour in order of nature only, not in time. But though the Creation be different from Generation and Proceſſion, yet it as little requires length of time to effect it: for God ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light; in like manner it may be that he ſaid long before, Let there be innumerable hoſts of material and perceptive individual ſubſtances, each in ſuch and ſuch particular ſtation, ſome conſtituting compounds by their mutual juxta-poſition, having ſuch and ſuch impulſes of motion among them, and it was ſo: nor can any man pretend to limit the time when it was he ſaid this. Therefore there is no contradiction nor abſurdity in the thought of the creature being co-eternal with the Creator; poſterior in order indeed it muſt have been, but not neceſſarily in time: for God might have created as ſoon as he was God omnipotent, that is, from all eternity without beginning.

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Nevertheleſs ſince the conceptions of men are various, and I ſhould be glad to make every one's thoughts conſiſtent with themſelves, if not reconcilable with thoſe of other people, I ſhall try what can be done for the benefit of ſuch as hold it impoſſible, heterodox and abſurd, that there ſhould have been any created being exiſtent ſix thouſand years ago. Yet I ſuppoſe they will allow God to have exiſted from all eternity, and that he might from all eternity have deſigned and laid out the plan he was to execute in time: ſo the perſons might have been eternally diſtinct in the boſom and counſels of God, who contemplated the gracious and glorious purpoſes he ſhould accompliſh in thoſe three characters. And this may ſerve for an explanation of the text, Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

13. And now I have done my beſt towards explaining this moſt myſterious article of the doctrines taught in our Church. I hope I ſhall not be ſuſpected of a ſecret intention to undermine the foundations of Religion, nor yet to miſlead or impoſe any thing upon the conſciences of men: but it will be ſeen that my purpoſe was nothing more than an honeſt attempt to put a rational and intelligible conſtruction upon the words delivered, without pronouncing upon the truth and falſehood of the matters contained therein when clearly underſtood. For I would

would be conſidered as a commentator, not as a judge: I pretend to no authority nor extraordinary ſkill in divinity, therefore lie under no temptation to conclude with, This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, without doubt he ſhall periſh everlaſtingly. But ſuch concluſion having been annexed to expoſitions in former times, leads me to examine what it is that makes a fundamental, neceſſary to ſecure us from eternal perdition.

Happineſs is the ultimate end of action, and every man's own happineſs the ultimate end to him: but happineſs conſiſts in the aggregate of pleaſures, not in any ſingle pleaſure taken by itſelf. Now it often happens that an action, which gives us preſent pleaſure, may occaſion great uneaſineſs in the conſequences; as on the other hand an action painful in preſent, may produce great pleaſures afterwards: therefore the firſt fundamental is Prudence, or a regard to the whole income redounding from any meaſure of conduct; with a preference of the ſum of happineſs, remaining upon balance, before any preſent enjoyment or avoidance of trouble. But as our proſpect does not ſtand limited to the ſcenes of this life, nor the conſequences of our conduct terminate here; ſo neither ought our computation of happineſs nor meaſures of prudence to be confined to temporal advantage.

Yet we can make no diſcoveries in viſible nature to direct us in what manner to prepare

for our future welfare: the only rational ground we have to go upon, muſt be in contemplation of the ſupreme Being, who is one, almighty, all-wiſe, omniſcient, beneficent, and equitable God, Maker and Governor of the univerſe, having formed the whole into one kingdom with a mutual connection of intereſt between all the members. Hence we are to regard ourſelves as citizens of the world in the largeſt ſenſe of the word, having no ſeparate intereſt from that of the whole; ſo that it is the intereſt of every one of us to advance the good of the Creation by contributing our little ſhare thereto, in ſuch part of it wherewith we have immediate intercourſe, doing all the ſervice we can to our fellow-creatures, but ſtill preferring the ſum of happineſs, whether in the extent of our ſervices to many, or ſolid fruits of them to particular perſons, before preſent pleaſure or gratification: and this is the ſureſt way we can proceed to make preparation for our own future advantage.

Thus it is our knowledge of the Deity that lays the foundation of our ſocial duties, bringing them home to our own intereſt: it points out the only meaſures conducive to our happineſs hereafter, and it likewiſe ſecures us preſent peace, and ſolace of mind. Therefore it behoves us to acquire a ſtrong idea of the univerſal government of God, that nothing happens without his knowledge and permiſſion; a ſound

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and lively ſenſe of his Providence ordering all things for the beſt to the whole, and a firm perſuaſion of his equity enſuring to us our ſhare of the good diſpenſed: which will render us ſatisfied under his adminiſtration, pleaſed with our exiſtence, induſtrious in promoting the benefit of others, and attentive to our own advantages, with a manly diſdain of all momentary gratifications that would beguile us away from them.

Theſe conceptions then of the divine nature and attributes are the fundamental and eſſence of Religion, which whoever poſſeſſes compleatly, needs nothing elſe to procure his happineſs. There are thoſe who pretend they can attain all this by their own ſtrength exerted in the due exerciſe of their natural reaſon: the Church aſſerts the contrary, and that they can neither know how to go about their work without the inſtructions given in the goſpel, nor proceed in it effectually without the divine aſſiſtance, which they muſt recur to the ſame oracle for directions how to obtain. It is not my buſineſs to enter into the controverſy between them: I am now to follow the clue given by the Church, making my obſervations as I paſs along the ground whither ſhe leads.

Now in order to receive benefit from the Goſpel, a man muſt be perſuaded of its authenticity, and of thoſe doctrines expreſſed therein ſo plainly as that he who runs may read: ſuch

as that mankind is fallen from that perfect ſtate wherein they were originally created; that God has manifeſted his power at ſeveral times among them by miracles, prophecies and revelations; that Jeſus Chriſt was a divine perſon, the Son of God, who by his death and reſurrection reinſtated them in that capacity of happineſs they had loſt by the fall; nevertheleſs this is a capacity only, not an actual attainment, of no avail to particular perſons without their endeavours to live a life of righteouſneſs, ſtrengthened by the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit to make them effectual; that the Scriptures are the word of God containing the rules of righteouſneſs, together with certain ceremonies and inſtitutions neceſſary to lead into the practice of them, and to obtain the divine aſſiſtance. Theſe I take to be the fundamentals; but what there is of them peculiar to Chriſtianity (for many of the doctrines plainly expreſſed, and the neceſſity of our own endeavours, are not peculiar) are remotely ſo, becauſe connected with thoſe above deſcribed as eſſentially fundamental.

For Chriſt aſſures us that no man can come to the Father but through the Son: ſo then coming to the Father, that is, attaining ſuch a juſt and full ſenſe of the divine Attributes as Adam might, is the fundamental point, and were it now poſſible to have acceſs any other way, this would not be needful: but becauſe it is not poſſible, therefore coming to the Son becomes

comes fundamental derivatively for the ſake of that originally ſo, whereto it opens the ſole paſſage: yet it is unalterably fundamental, the derivation being made through human nature which we can never diveſt ourſelves of.

14. We have not yet found all the articles of the Athanaſian creed to be fundamentals, nor eſſential characteriſtics to diſtinguiſh a diſciple of Chriſt: he cannot well be ſuch indeed without believing Chriſt a divine perſon, and the Son of God in ſome ſenſe or other peculiar to himſelf, and that the operations of the holy Ghoſt are the acts of God himſelf; but I apprehend he may be a very good Chriſtian without holding the Trinity in Unity as there deſcribed, and all the particulars of the hypoſtatic union, for they are not to be found in Scripture. I do not deny the ſenſe of them is contained there, but a man muſt have gone through the univerſity and read a library of books to find it out; and when he has done, it is ten to one but another man, who has had a univerſity education, and read a library too, will pronounce him heretical.

We have obſerved in § 10. that the Scripture frequently blends the acts and offices of the three Perſonæ together in ſuch manner as to make it ſcarce poſſible to diſtinguiſh them, nor is it always eaſy to know when what is ſpoken of Chriſt ſhould be applied to his human nature, or his divine, or to both jointly. He is called

the Son of David and proved to be ſo by a genealogical table, which can relate only to the man Jeſus, for the Son of God, nor the united Chriſt, was not begotten from the loins of David: he is called ſo too as being the king and deliverer of whom David was a type, and the Logos or Promiſe which was to deſcend into union with one of David's ſeed; and this double ſenſe made the difficulty that puzzled the Jews upon the queſtion, If David called him Lord, how then was he his ſon?

Hence I think we may reaſonably infer, that theſe metaphyſical niceties are not to be ranked among the things which he that runs may read, nor were intended to be given in the Scriptures as fundamentals of the Chriſtian faith. Not but that a man may laudably take pains to underſtand every thing recorded there, yet he need not lie under terrors for the event, nor give himſelf over as a child of perdition, if he ſhould not comprehend, or ſhould happen to think wrong upon the myſterious points: provided the miſtake is ſuch as ſhall not involve him in error with reſpect to the doctrines plainly expreſſed; and this proviſo is neceſſary to be conſidered for underſtanding what I am going to offer next.

For popular opinions are always bound up in ſets, a number of articles compoſe together one entire ſyſtem. The common Chriſtian cannot examine them ſingly, he muſt take every one

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or reject all; and if you can ſet him againſt any one, he generally does reject all, and paſſes over into an oppoſite ſect. But it is not unuſual for crafty or wrong headed perſons to draw the unwary imperceptibly into an oppoſite ſect by their own interpretations of a received article. When this happens it becomes neceſſary to obviate the miſchief by drawing out the article into more particulars than were needful before, which then grows into a fundamental, becauſe connected with what was truly ſo, protecting it as a neceſſary defence and outwork. But an outwork, though of no uſe for inhabitancy or cultivation or any accommodation of life, yet is of neceſſary uſe for the defence of the place: and the more remote theſe adventitious fundamentals are from the eſſential, the more ſacred they ought to be eſteemed; becauſe having no intrinſic value, there is nothing beſide the opinion of their ſacredneſs to engage men, who cannot diſcern the dependence of their ſafety in eſſentials upon them, to maintain their ground againſt attacks.

15. Now we may preſume the divines of ſound judgement and piety about Athanaſius's time found the ſyſtem of Arius eſſentially erroneous, but ſupported by ſome plauſible interpretations of the texts relating to the Perſonæ: it became neceſſary then to compile the creed commonly called Athanaſian, to be couched in expreſſions oppoſite to thoſe uſed by Arius, as

an outwork to protect the Chriſtian flock from being beguiled by his inſinuations. To inſtance in one particular point: I know very little of Arius, but have heard enough of the Omoouſion and Omoiouſion to perſuade me he taught the Son was not of the ſame but of ſimilar ſubſtance with the Father, that is, God made or created another God, numerically diſtinct from himſelf, but of the ſame divine nature, and alike infinite in power, wiſdom, goodneſs and all the other Attributes.

Now I muſt own this notion ſeems to me productive of conceptions eſſentially erroneous, as being derogatory to the Deity by ſuppoſing the work of his hand could be equal to himſelf, and therefore cannot blame the Church for guarding againſt it by oppoſite terms ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſe. For the common Chriſtian might not exactly know the difference between numerical and ſpecific identity, or ſimilitude of ſubſtance, he muſt know that Same was a different word from Similar; and if he could not tell preciſely what was meant by Begotten, ſtill he might know well enough that it was not Made, nor Created; ſo would ſtand upon his guard when he heard any body uſing the prohibited words, not to heed any thing elſe they ſaid. This creed then as the Church was circumſtanced at that time, became a fundamental: but being only circumſtantially ſo, had the greater need of a ſacred awe to enforce a regard

gard to it. Therefore Athanaſius, or whoever thought proper to aſſume his name, inſerted the damnatory clauſes, becauſe they knew the plain man had but one option, either to be orthodox or Arian throughout, and fall into all the errors of that ſect; which yet he might innocently ſlide into by degrees, unleſs armed againſt the firſt approaches with a ſacred dread and horror of a ſpeculative miſtake they knew muſt draw fatal conſequences behind.

Thus the fundamental article ſeems to be negative rather than affirmative, to believe there are not three Gods nor the Son a creature; not actually to believe the Trinity in Unity with all the other hard words employed in the creed: and we may preſume they exacted only a verbal not an intellectual aſſent. For they muſt know it was impoſſible for the vulgar to comprehend them, and that no man can aſſent to a propoſition he does not comprehend, any further than that it contains a truth, though he does not know what it is.

Having made this conceſſion, for fear the freethinker ſhould turn it to a uſe I never intended, I muſt remark that there is a very material difference between comprehending the thing affirmed, and comprehending what is ſaid of it: the former is not neceſſary to gain aſſent, the want of the latter is no poſſible ground either of aſſent or diſſent, other than that vague one of an unknown truth. I can believe that ſomething

thing has exiſted in all eternity without a cauſe, yet I can neither comprehend eternity, nor how any thing can exiſt without a cauſe, becauſe all the things I have experience of had cauſes of their exiſtence. If a man pretends he carries home Paul's church in his pocket, I comprehend clearly what he ſays and ſee plainly it is impoſſible; therefore muſt think him a liar while I take him ſeriouſly, and not as a joker meaning a print of the church. If he ſays he moved two balls lying in cloſe contact upon a billiard table by touching only one of them, I can eaſily believe him, though I cannot comprehend how the hindmoſt ball can begin to move before the foremoſt has gone off to leave room for it, nor yet how it can give motion to the other before it has any itſelf; ſo that the motions of both ſeem neceſſarily prior in order and time, to one another. But if he tells me, that motion is the act of being in power ſo far forth as in power, I do not comprehend what he ſays, ſo cannot poſſibly give either aſſent or diſſent: it may be as true as the goſpel for aught I know, and if I have a good opinion of his judgement and ſincerity, I ſhall believe he has a meaning in the expreſſion, and that it contains a certain truth, though what the truth is I cannot poſſibly gueſs.

I doubt not there are multitudes of pious Chriſtians, and many very ſenſible perſons, to whom the Athanaſian creed appears much the

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ſame language as the act of being in power ſo far forth as in power, in which caſe it will be impoſſible for them to give it an intellectual aſſent: yet for all that, if they have any opinion of the Church, they may eaſily believe it contains the true Chriſtian doctrine, and this is enough to keep them from the Arian hereſy; for little as they can comprehend the terms employed, they cannot fail of diſcerning their contrariety to thoſe of ſimilar ſubſtance and a created God, or a creature inveſted with the divine Attributes, and made equal with God.

16. There ſeems little danger now to the public from the Arian hereſy: it may have crept into the cloſets of a few ſpeculatiſts, but you can do nothing with them by creeds: force them to repeat what words you pleaſe, they will put their own ſenſe upon them; for the Roſycruſian art of tranſmutation will work wonders, as often converting gold into baſe metals as theſe into gold. Therefore in my humble opinion this creed might be ſpared, as being an outwork to a quarter not now liable to attacks, and giving ſcandal to this enlightened age wherein every body expects to underſtand every thing: and I have heard ſome divines expreſs a wiſh it were dropped out of our Liturgy.

Nevertheleſs while it remains an outwork, we ought not to let the enemy make a lodgement upon it; to prevent which was the deſign of this Chapter rather than any direct benefit I could

could expect to do the believer: for the leſs he concerns himſelf with particulars upon this matter, the better. I have ſaid it is one of thoſe points remotely fundamental which were made ſo by circumſtances of times, and as things ſtand at preſent circumſtanced, ſeems to retain no more of that quality than enough to render a direct oppoſition the mark of an enemy, but not an actual reception neceſſary to characterize a friend.

For my part I am for enlarging the pale of orthodoxy as wide as poſſible without breaking the encloſure, and for that purpoſe would contract the number of fundamentals, for it is by multiplying them that the walls of partition have been run acroſs, dividing the ground into ſo many little ſcanty cloſes. Therefore if a man inadvertently or in private confidence gives me ſuſpicion that he is not perfectly Athanaſian, I can give him the right hand of fellowſhip, if I have none other reaſon to withhold it. Nay further, though I fear it will be thought carrying my Chriſtian charity beyond bounds, if he only eſteems the introduction and propagation of Chriſtianity as an event eminently providential, doubting of the ſupernatural facts recorded, and conſults the Scriptures jointly with his own reaſon in forming his idea of the ſupreme Being, the adminiſtration of the moral world, his religious ſentiments and rules of conduct, ſtill I am inclined to admit him into the bro-

brotherhood, provided he leaves other people in quiet to believe as much more as they pleaſe, without undervaluing or attempting to puzzle them upon that account. But if he ſhews a fondneſs to impugn or ridicule things generally holden ſacred, I muſt regard him as an adverſary: and ſince perſons of no Religion delight much in ſuch practices, I may ſuſpect him to be a bad man, but at beſt ſhall think him indiſcreet, unſkilled in human nature, and defective in that regard to order and the public good, which is one of the principal moral duties.

17. The want of diſtinguiſhing between eſſential and remote fundamentals, ſeems to be the fatal rock upon which both the bigot and freethinker make ſhipwreck, though they are caſt off to oppoſite ſides. The former finds certain inſtitutions, ceremonies and articles of faith ſtrongly inculcated as neceſſary to make a true diſciple, ſo he places righteouſneſs wholly in them: orthodoxy with him is all in all, he hunts ſermons, ſings pſalms, and prays literally without ceaſing, and becomes righteous overmuch. He ſees no difference betwen the ſkin and ſubſtance of Religion, nor that becauſe the fruit cannot ripen without the ſkin, therefore ſuch ſtrict charge is given to preſerve it unbroken: ſo he crams himſelf with ſkin to a ſurfeit, till he has no room for the fruit. He forgets that Chriſt will diſown thoſe who ſay unto him, Lord, Lord, but do not the Will of the Father:

Father: ſo doing this Will is the ſole eſſential point, and the Lord, Lord, being neceſſary only for the ſake of that, ought to be repeated no oftener than ſuch neceſſity requires.

On the other hand the freethinker, ever haſty and ſuperficial, looks no deeper than the ſkin, which he very ſhrewdly diſcovers can contain no nouriſhment for the mind: ſo he perpetually teazes you with childiſh queſtions, What Religion is there in forms and ceremonies? what ſacredneſs in one day, or place, more than another? can God eternally reward, or damn a man according as he ſays Ay or No to a ſpeculative propoſition? For it never enters into his ſhallow pate to reflect that things of no moment in themſelves may become highly valuable by their connections, and draw conſequences of the utmoſt importance. What is money good for? you cannot eat it, you cannot drink it, you cannot cloath your back with it, nor warm yourſelf by it in winter: it is of none other uſe than to play at chuck, or ſpin upon a table to pleaſe a child, and our forefathers in the infancy of mankind could do very well without it: nevertheleſs as the world goes, a competency of it is of neceſſary uſe to procure us all other things neceſſary, and we are forced to teach our children to be careful of the main chance, without which they will inevitably run themſelves into diſtreſs and miſery.

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I ſuppoſe he would laugh me to ſcorn if I ſhould ſay, that faith may have an effect upon the conſtitution, or that my pulſe and digeſtion would be ever the worſe whatever my opinions were: yet for all that, to uſe his own favourite verb, I will venture to ſay that if I ſhould happen to believe arſenic was ſugar, it might coſt me my life; or if I ſhould loſe my faith in exerciſe, I might pore over metaphyſics, till I had brought on a jaundice, and ſo ſhorten my days by that hereſy; or as this diſtemper is known to render the ſight confuſed and darken the underſtanding, I might become a freethinker.

In like manner how little ſoever the Athanaſian ſubtilties may add to the ſtock of uſeful knowledge, yet if you teach the plain man to regard them as impoſitions, he will think himſelf impoſed upon in other things too, and practiſe ſobriety and honeſty no further than to eſcape the laſh of the law, and cenſures of the world. For he cannot trace theſe duties to their natural foundations, nor ſee their reference to his own intereſts: he thinks them duties becauſe enjoined in the Goſpel, and he reverences the Goſpel upon the authority of the Church, ſtanding in no ſituation to examine other evidences. Therefore it is too early to deprive him of this channel, till you can find ſome other way of inſpiring him with juſt

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ſentiments of the relation he ſtands in to his Creator, and his fellow creatures.

To conclude, though one may eaſily eſcape violent extremes, it is very difficult to hit the middle line between a ſtrictneſs, and looſeneſs of principle; and the more ſo, becauſe it varies according to times, and circumſtances, and perſons you have to deal with. Being apprized of this difficulty, we ought to uſe our beſt diſcretion upon all occaſions, bearing in mind that there are fundamentals not eſſential, but made ſo by their connection with others, partly by human nature, and partly by inſtitution: and to preſerve our Chriſtian charity with a great backwardneſs in thinking hardly or contemptuouſly of our neighbours for their believing either too little, or too much: for in our ſpiritual as well as our natural food, the ſame quantity may be too little for one man, which is too much for another.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Redemption.

THE doctrine of the Redemption, as commonly underſtood, depends upon that of the Trinity: for the ſin of Man, being a wilful diſobedience and direct rebellion againſt God, made ſuch a breach upon his authority as no puniſhment leſs than eternal could repair; nor could this be remitted without violation of the divine Juſtice, unleſs upon ſome meritorious act ſufficient to make amends for the flagrancy of the offence committed. Which act muſt be performed by Man, becauſe Man having done the injury, muſt make the reparation: but he being under the dominion of ſin, had not ſtrength to do any thing good, nor if he had, could it have been meritorious, all his ſervices being of juſtice due to his Creator and ſupreme Governor; therefore it was neceſſary he ſhould be inveſted with a divine power by a union with God himſelf, in order to open a paſſage for mercy. Yet the party offended could not make atonement to himſelf; ſo that Man muſt have remained obnoxious to eternal puniſhment, if there had not been diſtinct Perſons in the Godhead; one of whom in tranſcendent love to mankind, being pleaſed to take our nature upon

him, might make adequate ſatisfaction to the other, for the injury done to divine juſtice.

There are many objections made againſt this doctrine all taken from the groſſeſt ſenſe in which it can be underſtood: for it is well known, that upon abſtruſe ſubjects, the ſame expreſſions will convey very various ideas to different perſons, according as they have been formed by nature, or trained by practice for ſuch exerciſes. But the Freethinker conſtantly takes his notions upon an article of Religion from the apprehenſions of the vulgar, being unable to reach, or unwilling to ſeek for any more rational conſtruction; and employs what little penetration he has, to find abſurdities in them which never occur to the vulgar.

Now if we could dive into the thoughts of our common people, who yet may be very good Chriſtians and as good men as ourſelves (for goodneſs does not conſiſt in ſtrength of parts or depth of underſtanding,) we ſhould probably find them apprehending that God created Man to fill up the vacant ſpaces left in heaven by the fallen Angels: but before he would admit him into the ſacred manſions, he determined to try whether he would approve himſelf worthy of them. So he placed him in a garden, where was plenty of all the conveniencies and enjoyments of life, which were given him to make free uſe of except one tree, which he was forbidden

bidden to touch under pain of death. Nevertheleſs Man, by the ſuggeſtions of the ſerpent, did eat of that tree, and thereby deſervedly provoked the anger of God; who for this heigh of ingratitude and diſobedience, condemned him to dwell in everlaſting flames with that rebellious ſpirit whoſe wicked inſinuations he had voluntarily choſen to hearken to, rather than pay an eaſy obedience to one ſingle command of his Maker and Benefactor. But the Son of God, in compaſſion to mankind, interceded with his Father in their behalf; and that the authority of God might not ſuffer by letting ſin paſs with impunity, he condeſcended to take the human nature upon him, and therein pay the penalty due to divine Juſtice for the tranſgreſſions of Man.

Having thus purchaſed pardon by the price of his blood, God will grant it for his ſake, and upon his interceſſion: which he never fails to make for ſuch as are members of his body, and it is not fit he ſhould make it for thoſe who refuſe to be incorporated thereinto. But the conditions to become a member of Chriſt are theſe, to truſt in his name, to reſiſt the world, the fleſh and devil, to perform all kind of good offices to their fellow members, which he will eſteem as ſervices actually done to himſelf, and to do good to thoſe who are not of the houſhold of faith, in imitation of their heavenly Father, who maketh his ſun to ſhine upon the good

and upon the evil, and ſendeth his rain upon the juſt and the unjuſt. For orthodoxy alone will not ſerve the turn: when ſuch as depend wholly upon that apply to him for his interceſſion in the dreadful diſtreſſes of the laſt day, ſaying, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? he will ſay unto them, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I know ye not.

2. Now the vulgar ſee nothing of the difficulties in this ſcheme, which the Freethinker has juſt wit enough to find out, but not enough to avoid by putting a rational conſtruction upon the doctrines delivered. They know that experiment is the proper proof of a man's character, who cannot know himſelf, nor can any body elſe tell, whether he be a good or wicked man until put to the trial: nor find any impropriety in imagining God to make trial before he would admit him to an attendance upon his throne in heaven together with the holy Angels. This blot is not hit by the Freethinker, who admits the abſolute contingency and ſelf-origin of human action, becauſe by this principle he can claim his ſhining virtues as entirely his own, not the gift of God in any ſenſe, nor dependent upon motives deriving through a chain of cauſes from the proviſions of Heaven, ſo he finds no fault with the ſuppoſition of God being uncertain how his creatures would behave until he had

had experience of it; he only cavils at the triflingneſs of the teſt, being none other than a prohibition againſt eating a particular ſort of apple.

They ſee nothing unbecoming the divine nature in aſcribing anger thereto: for the beſt of men are angry at wilful diſobedience and crying ingratitude, and there are ſome offences which cannot be pardoned, even by a merciful prince without unhinging the authority of his government. Nor is it unprecedented in the beſt policied ſtates, that acts of attainder ſhould paſs againſt a whole rebellious race for the delinquency of their anceſtor; nor that obſtinacy and wickedneſs ſhould run in the blood from one generation to another.

They ſee the greateſt noblemen have children like themſelves, whom they did not make nor create, but who deſcended from them, and for whom they have a particular fondneſs by paternal inſtinct: therefore why might not God have a Son of the ſame uncreated nature with himſelf, and be prevailed upon by his importunities to abate of his anger, if a means could be found out to ſatisfy his juſtice?

They have a very inaccurate notion of numerical identity, imagining that things different may be made identical by union, ſeeing as they think numberleſs inſtances of many ſubſtances by being united and incorporated together becoming one and the ſame ſubſtance: ſo they

make no ſcruple at the thought of the Son of God taking the human nature upon him by union with a particular man, whereby God and that man became one Perſon, one individual Being.

They can eaſily apprehend, that this God-man, to whom belonged infinite ſtrength and power, might bear the whole weight of puniſhment inflicted upon the whole human race; thereby fully diſcharging the debt due to juſtice, and opening the door for mercy to take her courſe, without infringing upon the divine authority.

They ſtagger not at the doctrine of imputed righteouſneſs: for as a man who has voluntarily paid money to the creditor of many perſons, has a right to have it carried to the account of ſuch among them as he thinks proper; ſo the united God and man, having paid the ranſom for ſin by his ſufferings, which were free ſervices to the divine juſtice he was under no obligation to perform, had a right to have his merits imputed, and interceſſion avail for the benefit of whomſoever he pleaſed, and to impoſe ſuch terms upon the imputation and interceſſion, as to him ſeemed good.

3. It muſt be owned that this idea of the Redemption has had many abſurd and pernicious notions engrafted upon it: the approach to God by interceſſion has been made a handle for turning our Salvation into a buſineſs to be

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managed by intrigue and intereſt, and to repreſent the court of heaven by ſimilitude with the courts of earthly princes, to whom you cannot have acceſs unleſs by their miniſter. And becauſe ſinful man was unworthy to approach the throne of glory without the interceſſion of a Mediator, therefore the Son, being of equal glory with the Father, muſt keep the like diſtance with all except a few particular favourites, without whoſe recommendation nobody could be heard; who themſelves too were too great to be addreſſed by the common Chriſtian: ſo he could obtain nothing without making intereſt with the prieſt to pray to the ſaint to pray to Chriſt to pray to God for him; and in order to gain favour with theſe inferior miniſters or ſub-mediators, he muſt pay the prieſt, and make offerings to the Saint.

Then the imputation of merit and conditions annexed to obtaining it, left room for a ſuppoſal of ſome perſons exceeding the conditions required, and by their extraordinary holineſs purchaſing more imputed merit than they wanted for themſelves: nevertheleſs they might not impute it over to ſuch others as they pleaſed, but the overplus went into the treaſury of the Church, from whence it was to be bought for Money, by any who had a mind to be ſaved without fulfilling the conditions required of him.

The inability of man to do any thing acceptable to God, the direction to eſchew the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the neceſſity of a conſtant lively truſt in the Mediator, enjoined to keep the mind vigilant and vigorous in performing the practical conditions annexed, have been made a handle by our modern enthuſiaſts for running counter to the uſages of mankind, for deteſting their fellow creatures as reprobate and abandoned, for placing all in Faith together with lecture-hearing, hymn-ſinging, ejaculating, alms-giving, auſterities, and other means of ſtrengthening it; and believing that the greater ſinner a man is, the more glory redounds to the Mediator from ſaving him, and the higher truſt he repoſes in him.

But all theſe are corruptions of Chriſtianity, inventions of crafty or ſelf conceited perſons taking indefatigable pains to throw conceptions into the vulgar which would never have entered their heads. For the natural inference from the doctrine of a Redeemer, God as well as man, ſuffering intolerable pains to expiate for ſin, impoſing as conditions of his interceſſion a reſiſtance of the world, the fleſh and the devil, an unreſerved good will and labour of love towards all fellow members of the ſame ſpiritual body, and extended beyond them to enemies and perſecutors, is none other, than that ſin excludes from God and happineſs, that uſing all

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our might to eſcape every commiſſion of it, is the only way to bring ourſelves within the verge of that deliverance worked for us from the guilt already lying upon our heads: that God is inflexibly juſt, and though infinitely merciful, yet mercy cannot be had unleſs by means that will bring it reconcilable with juſtice.

Can the Redeemer who condeſcended to take upon him the form of a ſervant, to preach to the poor, to converſe with publicans and ſinners; can he be thought to take ſuch ſtate upon him, as that a poor man cannot approach him without making intereſt by his miniſters and favourites? Can he who is God everlaſting, be ignorant of our thoughts, or not know our neceſſities better than any ſaint or prieſt can tell him? Can he who freely and without aſking, laid down his life a ranſom for many, need the recommendation of his courtiers, or preſſing importunities of his virgin mother, to obtain his interceſſion with the Father for bleſſings, which for our unworthineſs we dare not, and for our blindneſs we cannot aſk? Can he who ſought not his own glory but the glory of him that ſent him, be grown fond of praiſe and inceſſant adoration for the pleaſure of receiving them; and not rather exact a ſtrong and ſteady attachment to his name, ſolely as a means of keeping his diſciples obſervant of the other conditions he has required of them? Can he who bore ſuch heavy weight of puniſhment to expiate

piate for ſin, be ever reconciled to the practice of it; or ſuffer any pſalm-ſinging, ſermon-hunting, ejaculating, or pious fervors, which are but a breath of air or turn of thought, to commute for the abſolute renunciation of it? Can he who died for all mankind, for enemies and rebels to the Father and the Godhead, be content with a narrow ſelfiſh temper for the ſake of paſſionate zeal for his name; with omiſſion in the duties of our ſtation; with negligence in improving or applying our talents to the temporal as well as ſpiritual benefit of the community; with religious vanity, cenſoriouſneſs, arrogance, affected hypocritical humility, or exultant rejoicing at the damnation of reprobates?

4. Notwithſtanding all the ſtrong and repeated injunctions to faith and truſt and dependence on the Redeemer, we are poſitively told it is not ſaying, Lord, Lord, but doing the Will of the Father that will entitle a perſon to his ſhare in the interceſſion. But God wants nothing and can receive nothing from us for himſelf: therefore his Will can be none other than the happineſs of his creatures with whom we have intercourſe, among whom our own perſons are included; and every contravention of that Will is properly to be underſtood by the word Sin. But happineſs conſiſts in a conſtant ſerenity and ſatisfaction of mind, which can only be enſured by a juſt ſenſe of the divine

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Power, Providence, and Attributes; and in thoſe externals contributing to the convenience and enjoyment of life, which can only be procured by the mutual endeavours of mankind aſſiſting one another, each in his ſeveral ſtation. But we are obſtructed in the proſecution of our own and the general intereſt, by our attachment to preſent pleaſure and our inordinate deſires, by the torrent of evil cuſtom prompting us to covetouſneſs, ambition, vanity and the like, by ſelfiſhneſs, envy, contention and malice; ſtiled in religious language the fleſh, the world, and the devil.

Thus it appears the doctrine of Redemption has none other ſcope than to bring appetite and paſſion under the dominion of reaſon, that we may never fall into ſin; that is, never indulge any fond humour or evil habit againſt what we know in our reaſon and our conſcience to be right, nor neglect our rules of conduct for purſuing our own advantages, or the good of our fellow creatures, to whom at any time we are capable of doing ſervice; in both caſes preferring the more important ſervice before the leſs: which is the very point whereto Philoſophy, if it be good for any thing, ought to bring men.

Therefore, as I have ſaid before in another place, I ſee no difference between a true member of Chriſt and a good citizen of the world, other than in their method of attaining theſe characters,

characters. If once compleat in them, both would proceed upon the ſame plan, a judicious, diligent, unreſerved endeavour to promote happineſs, as well of body as mind, in themſelves and others, in the community and private perſons, in friends, ſtrangers and enemies, in any ſubject, wherever they can; and to bring appetite and deſire of every kind obedient to the dictates of underſtanding.

This the Rationaliſt thinks he can compaſs by his own management: if he can, it is very well; he does the Will of the Father, and will be prepared to ſay, Lord, Lord, in an acceptable manner the moment he ſhall ſee convincing proofs of its being neceſſary: but he ought to be well aſſured he can find his own way, before he rejects the offer of aſſiſtance.

To ſuch as are conſcious they cannot attain this perfection by their own induſtry, the perſuaſion of a Redeemer, and thoſe religious exerciſes which fix their attachment to him become fundamentals, without which they cannot be ſaved either from ſin or the fatal conſequences of it: therefore every omiſſion of theſe exerciſes and whatever weakens their attachment, is ſin likewiſe, becauſe leading into that which was eſſentially ſo. But theſe ſins being made ſuch by their reference to others, their oppoſite duties too derive their value from a connection with the practical duties whereto they neceſſarily lead, and conſequently ceaſe to

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be duties whenever that connection is wanting. Therefore it behoves us to examine the tendency of our religious ſentiments and exerciſes, and attentively to obſerve what effect they have upon our conduct; without which we ſhall fall into ſuch as are ſpurious in kind, or extravagant in degree.

If our faith in the Redeemer repreſents him as indulgent to the vices of his worſhippers, or covetous of a zealous attachment to his name for its own ſake, or for any other cauſe than as a means of promoting the happineſs of his members: if our acts of devotion tend to make ourſelves or others uneaſy, deſponding, melancholy, ſuperſtitious and cenſorious; or draw us off from the improvement of our talents, from the duties of our ſtation, or render us leſs uſeful members of the community: they are ſinful inſtead of being pious, they are deluſions of the wicked one, rather than works of the Spirit. For God is all goodneſs and mercy and loving kindneſs, therefore the happineſs of his creatures muſt be his grand deſign: nor can we ever ſerve him well, unleſs by ſerving as his inſtruments in promoting this bleſſed purpoſe.

Our future happineſs is indeed incomparably more valuable than our preſent: but our gracious God, who is Lord of both worlds, has pleaſed ſo to connect the intereſts of them both, as that we have no ſurer way to future happineſs than

than by advancing that of the world wherein we live. The caſe may ſometimes ſo happen, as that the road of duty ſhall lie through private damage, through labour, pain, diſtreſs, uneaſineſs, affliction and perſecution: but whatever ſuch action does not tend nearly or remotely to the greater benefit of mankind, either in promoting the order and peace of ſociety, the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, the advancement of uſeful knowledge, accompliſhment and virtue, or encouragement of a happy temper of mind which avails more than all the reſt to preſent happineſs, may be pronounced a folly, rather than a ſervice to the Redeemer, or a doing the Will of the Father.

It cannot be expected that every common Chriſtian ſhould be able always to trace the tendency of his actions, therefore he is excuſable in following his rules; if thoſe who gave them have miſguided him, the fault lies at their door: beſides, the duties of men are various, ſuch as being not engaged in active life can do good no otherwiſe than by ſetting examples of piety and regularity, ought to practiſe a little more ſtrictneſs than is needful for others. Yet it is dangerous truſting to human guidance implicitly; every man has ſome judgement of his own, and his Redeemer will expect he ſhould improve every talent entruſted with him to the utmoſt, be it ever ſo ſmall; therefore let him uſe what judgement he has, to diſcover the real

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good of the world, or thoſe of its inhabitants whom his conduct may affect: he may ſtill fall into ſome excuſable indiſcretions, but will avoid the ſin of being righteous overmuch, that is, indulging an intemperance of zeal, a religious paſſion covered under the appearance of extraordinary righteouſneſs.

5. Nevertheleſs theſe ideas, though ſitting eaſy upon the ordinary Chriſtian, and affording him excellent nouriſhment, may lie heavy upon the digeſtion of the reaſoner, how well ſoever diſpoſed to receive inſtruction where conveyed to him in a manner not harſh, nor nauſeating to his palate. He may be apt to boggle at the notion of God omniſcient needing to try the works of his hands before he could know how they were qualified, at irremiſſible puniſhment, at damages ſuſtained by the Almighty, at a price paid to compenſate them in value, at original ſin, ſuffering by ſubſtitute, God undergoing puniſhment, and imputation of righteouſneſs: Let us try then whether, by help of what has been offered in the former parts of this work concerning the divine Attributes and adminiſtration of the moral world, we can underſtand the orthodox ſcheme of the Redemption, in a ſenſe that ſhall make it appear reconcileable with the diſcoveries of reaſon.

We have found that all events throughout the univerſe proceed from cauſes derived originally from the Almighty, ſo that nothing happens

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any where, unleſs by his permiſſion or appointment. We know by undoubted experience there is a mixture of evil in nature, and we may gather from the goodneſs of God, that his view never terminates upon evil, but he ſends it always as a neceſſary means to work out ſome greater good: what makes this neceſſity, or how the ſufferings of one ſpecies of creatures operate to the good of others, we may conjecture but cannot aſcertain, but that it is neceſſary we may reſt aſſured, becauſe elſe it would be totally removed. Nor is it impoſſible the ſame quantity of evil may always be neceſſary, and may paſs in rotation among the creatures: ſo there is no abſurdity in ſuppoſing one delivered by the ſufferings of another taking upon him this ſevere burden of public ſervice, which muſt conſtantly be performed by ſomebody: as a ſentinel is releaſed from the inclemencies of a ſtormy night by another being ſent to relieve him.

We have taken notice of an ancient opinion, embraced by many and countenanced by the ſacred writings, that all natural evil was the conſequence of moral; and have attempted to trace their progreſs by ignorance and imbecillity leading into wilful offence, and this drawing on puniſhment: ſo that all ſuffering is punitory, not inflicted immediately by the hand of God, but following by natural conſequence from misbehaviour of the creatures, nor was there

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more reaſon againſt ſubjecting the race of men to this ignorance and imbecillity, which muſt fall ſomewhere for the neceſſary purpoſes of the Univerſe, than any other ſet of creatures.

As all things proceed from the proviſions of God whoſe knowledge is infinite, we cannot ſuppoſe him ignorant of any conſequence to reſult from the proviſions he made: therefore the trial he put Adam to in the garden was not needful for his own ſatisfaction, the iſſue being certain before the trial was made; and herein we are ſupported by the ſacred text, wherein Chriſt is called the Lamb ſlain before the foundations of the world. But though the ſlaying could be only in deſignation, yet neither could it be deſigned before the want of it was known; nor could that be prior to the knowledge of Adam's fault, which conſequently was foreſeen before the foundations of the world.

Nor need we underſtand the trial to be that of a malefactor tried, convicted and condemned, for the crimes he has committed; but that made by the maſter of the mint, when he tries and condemns a large maſs of metal as below the ſtandard, upon aſſaying a little piece of it. For the ſuppoſition of our being puniſhed for the offence of our primogenitor, or becoming actual delinquents by his tranſgreſſion, has conſtantly proved a ſtumbling block which human reaſon could never get over: but we can eaſily apprehend that any one man may ſtand as a re-

preſentative of all the reſt, and by his conduct it might be tried what all other men would do in the like ſituation: for our actions follow preciſely upon the ideas and motives preſent to our imagination.

We commonly impute our ſeveral vices to ſome defect of conſtitution, or bad education, or evil company, or external accident: but the aſſay made upon Adam manifeſted what human nature was, and proved a condemnation of the whole race by ſhewing that a man placed in the moſt favourable ſituation of circumſtances poſſible, would yet be overcome by the firſt temptation aſſailing him. Thus we bring into the world with us an original ſin, by which I do not underſtand an actual guilt, but a certain propenſity to contract it upon occaſion offered: and ſo are born children of perdition, not as involved in it already, but becauſe fallen into a road that will lead inevitably thereinto.

This life being a preparation for the next ſtage of Being, the new inhabitants muſt enter thereinto diverſely conditioned and qualified, according to the ſtate of vital union with body they have paſſed through: but ſinfulneſs being the portion of human nature, muſt accompany every one who has partaken of that nature, and conſequently children dying immediately after birth without commiſſion of actual ſin, muſt be borne down with the weight of original ſin, or rather the natural inability to reſiſt temptation, which was evidenced by Adam's miſde-

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meanor. For we have found it probable in a former place, that future puniſhment is not inflicted immediately for crimes committed here, but they fix ſuch a taint upon the ſoul as will prompt it to commit greater crimes hereafter, and ſo to perpetuate the puniſhment by perpetuating offences. Therefore that ſtate of natural weakneſs which inevitably draws on offences, may without impropriety be ſtiled a ſtate of perdition: juſt as if you ſaw a man of too eaſy temper, who could not ſay no to any body, going to live among a company of debauchees, you would give him over for loſt, though you had never yet known him guilty of any actual debauchery.

6. We have ſeen in the Chapter on Equality, that the divine Equity enſures to every creature a proportionable ſhare in the treaſures of happineſs flowing among them from the divine Bounty, and that what mixture of evil is interſperſed therein ſhall likewiſe be ſhared equally among them all, either by a rotation of natural ſuffering, or by a retardment or abatement of happineſs: and in the Chapter on Providence, that God being Lord and Author of univerſal nature, wanted not power nor wiſdom to contrive his plan ſo, as that the rotation between good and evil, and equal diſtribution of both, ſhould be brought about by natural cauſes: yet that it was not incongruous with reaſon to imagine he might have interwoven his own immediate acts of Omnipotence into his plan, ſo that

the operations of ſecond cauſes, being a part only of the plans ſhould fall defective of his purpoſe, unleſs compleated by his own interpoſitions, predetermined before the foundations of the world.

Upon this ſuppoſition, there is no difficulty in apprehending that human nature might be ſo framed, as by continual repetition of offence, to draw on a perpetuity of puniſhment; at leaſt a greater length and degree of Aionian puniſhment, than fell to the ſhare of any creatures: God in his Equity and infinite Mercy having purpoſed to ſupply this imperfection in his ſecond cauſes, by acting himſelf in his filial character to rectify them. The Mundane Soul, or hoſt of Angels, or diſembodied Spirits having a full view of all nature, muſt ſee that by this diſpoſition of ſecond cauſes, Equity was violated; they knew this Attribute would right itſelf again ſome how or other, but in what manner they could not tell, not being able to penetrate the ſecret counſels of God, nor inſpect that part of his plan containing his own interpoſitions, therefore this was the myſtery which they deſired, or as the Greek word imports, ſtooped earneſtly down to look into.

In the Chapter on divine Juſtice, and the article of Demerit in the Chapter on Freewill, it has been made appear, that there is no eſſential nor immediate connection between offence and puniſhment; the connection is made by the medium of expedience; puniſhment being due, not

not ſtrictly for the paſt delinquency, which cannot be undone, but for prevention of future miſchief, or for attaining ſome benefit greater than the evil of the ſuffering: while this medium remains, Juſtice muſt proceed her courſe; whenever it can be removed, Mercy will take place. If then the ſufferings of Man were of neceſſary advantage to the creation, the payment of that penalty was a thing of value, which God would exact as a debt due to his Juſtice; nor could remit without a compenſation equal in value, not to himſelf, for he could neither be endamaged nor made amends, but to his ſubjects. Therefore we muſt conclude, that the voluntary ſufferings of the Redeemer, anſwering the ſame purpoſe which would have been effected by the ſufferings of Man, rendered the latter needleſs, and opened the door for mercy: and in this light may juſtly be ſtiled a ranſom for ſin, a valuable conſideration paid for the purchaſe of pardon.

7. We know ſo little of the relation we ſtand in to the inviſible world, that it would be in vain to conjecture what particular advantages might have accrued thereto from our puniſhment, and conſequently in what manner the compenſation operated to the ſame effect. But we may know that with reſpect to ourſelves, it tends to encreaſe our abhorrence and dread of ſin, which infinite Mercy could not remit without an amends we are not able to make ourſelves, and have no room to expect will be

made for us again, if we incur the penalty a ſecond time.

As to the thing done in compenſation, we may gather from the ſacred writings, it was nothing elſe than a conſtant uninterrupted adherence to rectitude of conduct againſt all temptations whatſoever; for Jeſus was like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted: and becauſe extreme pain, uneaſineſs and deſperation, are the hardeſt attacks for human nature to reſiſt, therefore he is ſaid to have paid the ranſom upon the croſs; not but that we may allow his holy life to have been a part of the payment. Thus upon examining in what ſpecies of coin the ranſom was paid, we find it to have been a perpetual courſe of virtue and right action, an abſolute dominion of reaſon over the inferior faculties, an effectual reſiſtance of all pleaſure, indulgence, deſire, pain, terror, and other uneaſineſſes. For the plan of univerſal nature having been ſo drawn as that the ſelf-denials, diſappointments, and ſufferings of human creatures, were made of neceſſary uſe to other Beings, they could not be remitted without breaking the law of nature, and endamaging the creation: therefore all that could be done for man was, to draw out the ſting of them, and render them no evils, by enduing him with a vigour of mind capable to bear them willingly.

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If it be thought abſurd to imagine, that evil can be turned into a thing indifferent by any diſpoſition of mind whatever, I may keep myſelf in countenance by the authority of the ancient philoſophers, particularly the Stoics, who ſtrongly maintained that pain was no evil, but made ſo by opinion, that is, by the weakneſs of our mind: and we ſee their theory frequently confirmed by experience, for none of us but can bear little diſappointments, vexations and pains, without being hurt by them; and this not by inſenſibility, for we perceive the diſpleaſure and feel the ſmart; but ſuffer no diminution thereby in our preſent enjoyment and ſatisfaction of mind. Therefore they inſiſted that virtue, or rectitude, or wiſdom, for theſe were ſynonymous terms, was the only ſure way to happineſs, and that the Wiſeman muſt be always invariably happy beyond the power of fortune to hurt him.

But though right in theory they were romantic in expecting to ſee it verified in practice, or laying it down for an indiſpenſable rule of conduct: for moſt of us can bear little ſelf-denials and pains, and ſome of us pretty ſevere ones of one particular kind; the ſoldier can endure wounds, the ſtudent labours of thought, the plowman labours of body, the nurſe watchings, the ſurgeon naſtineſs, but none can bear evils of all ſorts and degrees of intenſeneſs without ſuffering cruelly by them; for human na-

ture is unequal to the taſk. But this height of perfection which nature cannot reach, it may be raiſed to by divine interpoſition: and the man Jeſus having this interpoſition to aſſiſt him continually, might actually be that Wiſeman which the philoſophers ſought in vain, and which was no where elſe to be found but in imagination.

8. Therefore the office performed by God in his ſecond Perſona or character of the Son, was to invigorate the human ſoul of Jeſus, that his underſtanding might never be overpowered by appetite, or paſſion, or any impulſe of imagination whatever, but conſtantly have the determination of his will in every ſingle inſtance; being ſupplied perpetually by the divine agency with what was wanting to the natural ſtrength of man, and to make a whole life of rectitude compleat, it was neceſſary the divine agency ſhould begin to operate early.

We commonly reckon children do not arrive at the uſe of reaſon, nor the capacity of good and evil, until ſeven years old, becauſe we cannot diſcern any thing of a moral character appearing in their actions before: but we know not what imperceptible miſconduct they may have fallen into ſooner, nor how early it may be needful to ſtrengthen the growing faculty to prepare it for a vigorous maturity: we may preſume the preparation cannot be made too early. Therefore the filial character accompanied the

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Soul of Jeſus from his birth, and he grew in grace and wiſdom in proportion to the growing powers it had to govern, and oppoſition it had to contend with.

But this wiſdom was moral wiſdom, of which I have elſewhere given mine idea diſtinguiſhing it from natural wiſdom: it is rather a vigour than capaciouſneſs of underſtanding; the ſame as the virtue of Prudence; weighed more with the greater good and the rules of duty pointing thereto than with preſent pleaſure or eaſe. For prudence does not conſiſt in ſagacity nor extent of knowledge: he that knows much but makes no uſe of it, is the more imprudent upon that account, and he is the moſt prudent man who makes the beſt profit of his knowledge, be it ever ſo ſmall.

The world in general lies under great miſtakes upon this article; they ſee only the outward action, ſo judge of the character by the greatneſs of the exploits performed: whereas a man of uncommon abilities may do great things with a very little ſhare of virtue, perhaps with none at all, by help of vanity, ambition, or the deſire of excelling. Your writers of Romance give their heroes an immenſe eſtate, irreſiſtible ſtrength, exuberant health, conſtitutional intrepidity, penetration, and extraordinary brightneſs of parts: never reflecting that with all theſe advantages one might work wonders without being a hero. To make him truly ſuch, they ought

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to deſcribe him doing more than common with only common endowments: nor could we with certainty pronounce any man a compleat hero, unleſs we knew he had done all that could be done with the powers and opportunities put into his hands. For the actions of wiſdom muſt be ſuch as lie in every one's power: there is a rule of rectitude for the porter, the cobler, the nurſe, and the ſavage, as well as for the prince, the politician, the general and the philoſopher; and who ever could perſevere in it invariably, would be equally a wiſeman in every ſtation.

This being the caſe, it was fitting the divine power ſhould not be joined with extraordinary endowments of body and mind, leſt the effects of them ſhould be confounded with the fruits of moral wiſdom: therefore the filial character was united to an illiterate carpenter, who we need not imagine gained more knowledge thereby in mathematics, aſtronomy, geography, policy, metaphyſics or other ſciences, than any common carpenter might have attained, if we could ſuppoſe him never once to have neglected the improvement of his talents. What ſupernatural knowledge he had was imparted to him, and the wonders he worked were perſormed by the Father, in the ſame manner as thoſe of Moſes, and the prophets.

9. By the help of what has been argued in the two foregoing ſections, we may remove the grand ſtumbling block of a ſuffering God; for we

we have ſeen the efficacy of moral wiſdom when compleat, to render the mind proof againſt every evil, ſo that it might voluntarily endure an extremity of torment without ſuffering by it. Therefore we need not try to make ſubtile diſtinctions between the divine and human natures, to ſhow that one might ſuffer when the other did not: for neither the united Chriſt, nor the man Jeſus thus divinely ſupported, was in a ſtate of evil or unhappineſs in the very moment of his greateſt agonies.

Perhaps it will be thought leſſening our obligation to the Saviour, to ſuppoſe him effecting our Redemption without hurt to himſelf, and repreſenting it as an act of prudence, which his wiſdom muſt ſhow him was expedient for his own ſake, no leſs than for the ſake of his fellow members: for Jeſus had a ſoul to be ſaved as well as we, and he did ſave it together with ours.

To this objection I ſhall anſwer in the firſt place; that I am juſtified in this repreſentation by the writer to the Hebrews, who tells us that Jeſus, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs deſpiſing the ſhame, that is, he acted for his own intereſt jointly with ours. In the next place to go upon the footing of human reaſon, let us recollect what has been ſaid in two Chapters of the firſt volume, on the ultimate Good and on Benevolence, and in ſeveral other

other places; wherein it has been ſhown from the ſurvey of human nature, that each man's own happineſs is his proper end of action which he ought invariably to purſue in every part of his conduct; and that benevolence was nothing elſe than a placing his happineſs in the good of others, or rather a lively firm perſuaſion of his own intereſt being inſeparably connected with the general: therefore where a man has this perſuaſion, he is as ſincere and hearty in the ſervices he does to another, as in any prudential meaſures he takes for his own private intereſt, and his benevolence is of the right genuine ſtamp.

But, you will ſay, if he endure great labour and pain, and ſuſtain damage for another's benefit, the obligation is greater, than if he could do it with eaſe and at no expence to himſelf. It may be ſo: yet if he can ſupport the trouble, the pain and the damage chearfully, it proves the glow of his kindneſs the ſerventer, and conſequently heightens the obligation and the endearment to ſuch, as are ſenſible what it is that ſupports him. For why ſhould we deſire to have thoſe that ſerve us ſuffer in the performance? It is unnatural for a man knowingly and voluntarily to make himſelf unhappy; or if he could do it; how ſhould we be the better than if he performed the ſame ſervices without being unhappy? Could we model the diſpoſitions of perſons about us with a wiſh, what could

could we wiſh more for our advantage than that they ſhould eſteem our intereſts their own, and take a real pleaſure in undergoing the ſevereſt trials for our ſakes? Honour is there moſt merited, where it can be moſt uſefully placed; therefore thoſe arduous exerciſes of virtue are are moſt laudable and meritorious, which are performed moſt chearfully, becauſe they will be done moſt effectually; for a man can never go through his work well, ſo long as it is irkſome to him.

It would be impious to imagine the organs of Jeſus rendered inſenſible, or that he did not feel the ſame weight of anguiſh, diſgrace and agony of deſpair, when he cried out; My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me, as any of us ſhould have done in the like ſituation; but that weight was overbalanced by the contemplation of his own intereſt being involved in that of the creation, and by the joy of opening a paſſage, whereby all mankind might arrive at the like tranquillity of mind under the ſevereſt preſſures.

10. This brings me to enquire, in what manner the ſufferings of the Redeemer operated to our benefit: and I apprehend it to have been, not by taking off any ſervice we were deſtined to perform for the univerſe, for this would be ſacrificing the general intereſt to the advantage of a few: nor by working a change in the conſtitution of human nature, for this would look like

like ſomething of a charm and magic; nor yet by turning the purpoſes of God from reſentment into mercy, for this would be to repreſent him liable to paſſion and mutability: but by ſetting an example which might lead us into the method of performing the hardeſt of our ſervices with the ſame tranquillity and ſatisfaction of mind that he did.

We know the force of ſympathy, and how much example is more prevalent than precept: a coward may face dangers and deſpiſe wounds in company of the brave, that had made him ſhudder in the apprehenſion, while alone. We know what incredible tortures the firſt diſciples were enabled to endure by continual contemplation of their Maſter's example, and their aſſiduity in thoſe devotions and inſtitutions, which contributed to fix ſuch contemplation more ſtrongly upon their minds. It is likely Eve would have reſiſted the temptation, had there been another woman to have rejected the apple with ſcorn in her preſence. Plato tells us, Virtue is ſo beautiful that if we could once ſee her unveiled, we ſhould be ſo enamoured of her charms, as to deſpiſe all things elſe in compariſon with her: ſo there wanted only one perfect Wiſeman, in whoſe actions ſhe might ſtand viſible to view, to bring all others into admiration of Wiſdom, by ſhowing its efficacy to turn pain into eaſe, and render the ſoul proof againſt all evil and unhappineſs.

Therefore

Therefore we are not to imagine our ranſom ſo fully paid, as that there is nothing left for us to pay: we are captives ſtill, but have the key put into our hands that will unlock the padlocks of our chains, ſo we muſt uſe the key to effect our deliverance; nor has Chriſt ſo ſaved us, but that we muſt ſtill work out our own ſalvation, in ſuch fear and trembling as is conſiſtent with a confidence of ſucceſs. The lawyers make a diſtinction between an obligation rendered void, or only voidable: both which in common acceptation are reckoned much the ſame, but I conceive it very meterial to preſerve in mind the like diſtinction here, though we need not always expreſs it in our diſcourſes: nor do I apprehend it heterodox to ſay, that we are not yet actually redeemed, but only made redeemable. The hand-writing againſt us is not blotted out, yet it may well be termed ſo, becauſe we have a ſponge given us to wipe it away ourſelves. The debt is not diſcharged, but a die is out for us by which we may ſtamp the current coin wherewith to diſcharge it fully. The imitation then of our grand examplar is the one thing needful for our deliverance, which muſt be worked out by ſtamping upon our minds that character of moral wiſdom which ſecured him continually againſt the approach of evil and miſery: and until we can compaſs that, our redemption remains incompleat.

From

11. From hence we may ſee the imputation of righteouſneſs, the mediation and interceſſion for ſinners ſtill continuing ſuch, are only figurative expreſſions, to denote that we derive our righteouſneſs from Chriſt, and are enabled by the medium of his example and aids, to fulfil the laws of nature, which were impracticable by us before. Yet ſtill the righteouſneſs muſt be actually derived to ourſelves and become our own, before it can be imputed to us: and though he has rendered the way paſſable by going before us, we muſt travel it after him with our own feet, or ſhall never arrive at our journey's end; we may expect to be helped forward, but not carried for any the moſt preſſing repeated importunities whatever. Therefore our truſt, our devotion, and our religious exerciſes, will not commute for the want of that righteouſneſs which is the ſole operating cauſe of our ſalvation, and which we may now attain by derivation from him: nor are they of any other avail than for the effect they may have upon ourſelves towards generating in us the like moral wiſdom, as exemplified by our leader, in the ready reſiſtance of pleaſure, deſire and temptation, and unreluctant endurance of the ſevereſt trials.

The ſum of our imitation then, and the ſubſtance of our duty, is the ſame with what was comprized by the old philoſophers in two words, BEAR and FORBEAR: but they could

could only tell us what would make for our good, whereas he has ſet us an example, and preſcribed inſtitutions and methods, whereby we may learn to bear and forbear with content and ſatisfaction to ourſelves. For he proclaims to us, Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt; for my yoke is eaſy and my burden light: he has made it ſo, not by taking off the weight, but by inuring our ſhoulders to bear it without galling. Thus Chriſtianity makes no alteration in the ultimate end of action, each man's own happineſs remains ſtill his proper aim.

But there are two roads to happineſs, gratification, pleaſure, eaſe, or whatever elſe you will call it; one by procuring the objects of deſire, the other by bringing deſire to the objects at hand, or which conduce moſt largely to our future advantage. The former we are ready enough to purſue of our own accord: the latter our Redeemer has made paſſable for us, and taught us to walk in. Therefore happineſs, enjoyment and eaſe of heart, being ſtill our proper point of purſuit, it is a ſpurious piety, a prepoſterous perverſion of his doctrine, to teach men that they merit heaven by voluntary auſterities, ſelf-denials, mortifications, and afflicting themſelves: for theſe things are abhorrent to nature, of no intrinſic worth or obligation, nor of any value unleſs when neceſſary to work out ſome greater advantage, either diſcerned by ourſelves,

ſelves, or evidenced to us by rules received from thoſe who know better. We are enjoined indeed to deny ourſelves, to ſubdue our paſſions, to mortify the fleſh, to undergo toils and labours; but then it is in order to prevent their being troubleſome to us, and proving a hindrance in the proſecution of our trueſt intereſts, and to inure us gradually by practice to a firmneſs of mind we cannot aſſume at once: yet the ſooner we can attain it, with the leſs regret and trouble to ourſelves we can enter upon the progreſs, the better it is, and the more acceptable.

Thus in the very exerciſe of ſelf-denial, we are ſtriving for our future enjoyment, and may laudably ſtrive for our preſent eaſe and ſatisfaction in the manner of ſupporting it. We are commanded to take up our croſs and follow our leader: we are not commanded to make croſſes for ourſelves, but take them willingly when caſt in our way by the courſes of Providence, for ſo did our leader: he did not make his own croſs, nor gratuitouſly cauſe himſelf to be nailed to it; he came eating and drinking, converſed with a chearful ſerenity among publicans and ſinners, aſſiſted to promote the innocent mirth of a wedding, practiſed no ſelf-impoſed auſterities, penances and abſtinences, for when he went up into the wilderneſs, he went not up by choice, but was led of the Spirit; that is, by ſome ſecret intimation of its expedience; while allowable

allowable he avoided the perſecution of the Jews, and at laſt prayed that the cup might paſs from him, but concluding, Neverthèleſs not my Will be done, but thine, O Father. Thus if we will follow him, obedience to the diſpenſations of Providence is our road, we muſt not pretend to voluntary ſervices nor meritorious performances; we are to do the Will of the Father, not our own Will, nor may chuſe for ourſelves even in the moſt arduous and perilous undertakings; any more than a ſoldier quartered in the Capital, in eaſe, ſecurity and plenty, may deſert his colours to join a corps going abroad upon a dangerous expedition.

But our Father is not a ſevere cruel taſk-maſter, but a gracious indulgent parent: he has ſhowered down his bleſſings of all kinds in abundance upon earth, on purpoſe that we ſhould enjoy them with thankfulneſs, and ſpread and improve them among our fellow creatures, where it can be done innocently without future detriment. He beſt knows what abſtinences and hard trials to call us to, and when ſuch ſervices will be real ſervices to his creation: it is our buſineſs to keep a watchful eye upon the rules of duty and expedience, to hold ourſelves in readineſs to obey the call, and to take up whatever croſs is thrown before us, looking up to the pattern that is ſet before us, and truſting for the promiſed aſſiſtance of the Comforter, if neceſſary, for effectuating our endeavours to

bear it without galling; ſtill ſearching about for any lawful means of avoiding it, but concluding with a ſincere and willing reſignation, Nevertheleſs not our Will be done, but thine, O Father.

And I apprehend this may ſerve as a clue for underſtanding many texts of Scripture which ſeem hard of digeſtion; ſuch as ſelling all our goods to give to the poor, turning the left cheek to him that has ſmitten the right, hating father and mother, wife and children, and the like, which are not to be taken for rules of conduct for us to practiſe, but directions what temper and firmneſs of mind we are to put on, enabling us to perform things the moſt reluctant to human nature, whenever the Will of the Father, manifeſted by particular ſituation of circumſtance, that is whenever neceſſity or duty ſhall ſo require.

12. Perhaps I ſhall be thought too rigorous in deſcribing the righteouſneſs which is to be the ſole operating cauſe of our ſalvation; ſuch perfect ungrudging reſiſtance both of pleaſure and pain, as above ſuppoſed to conſtitute it, being impracticable: but if we weigh the matter impartially without ſuffering ourſelf-fondneſs to caſt its weight of prejudice into the ſcale, we ſhall find nothing leſs can ſuffice effectually for our purpoſe. Our Redeemer requires it, for he enjoins us to take up our croſs and follow him, to die unto the world, to crucify the fleſh

wit

with the luſts thereof. The voice of heathen philoſophy requires it, for that declares happineſs reſerved only for the Wiſeman, who becomes ſuch by a total Apathy: by which is not to be underſtood an utter inſenſibility, a want of all affection or preference of one thing above another; but an exemption from all paſſion or perturbation, a fixed tranquillity of mind not to be thrown off the ſeat by any allurement, or croſs accident, or terror whatſoever.

But this is a voice only, informing us where lies our goal, and leaving us to get to it as well as we can: whereas the Redeemer leads on the way by his example, preſcribes certain methods for bringing us into breath, and aſſiſts us by the promiſed Comforter to invigorate our efforts: and eccleſiaſtical hiſtory teſtifies what almoſt incredible atchievements have been performed with theſe aids. Nevertheleſs with all theſe aids the work has not yet been compleatly perfected; for ſtill there is none that doeth good, no not one, the very beſt have their failings, and the moſt obedient feel the yoke ſometimes galling to their ſhoulders: from whence it ſeems to follow, there is ſomething remaining to be done in the other world: and the probability of room being left there for compleating the work of Redemption, may be gathered from ſeveral conſiderations.

If I do not egregiouſly miſtake the doctrines of our Church, I may lay down that the ſacri-

fice of Chriſt was offered for the whole human race, without exception of times, places or perſons; nevertheleſs that no man can reap the benefit of it without a particular application of it to himſelf by faith in the Redeemer. It is not here the place to examine what we are to underſtand by a ſaving Faith: this ſhall be reſerved for the next chapter. We need only now obſerve, that it muſt be an act of the Will, or rather a habit acquired by our own induſtry: ſo that no one of all the ſons of Adam will miſs his ſhare of the Redemption purchaſed, unleſs by his own fault. Yet what multitudes of Adam's ſons have paſſed off this earthly ſtage in the four thouſand years before Chriſt appeared!

It may be ſaid they had the promiſe of him that was to come: but how did they underſtand the promiſes? I will not pretend to ſay what might be the thoughts of ſome very few of the moſt enlightened, but it is well known the Jews in general expected a temporal deliverer: and though they ſpoke of a redemption from ſin, they meant thereby a deliverance from the diſtreſſes fallen upon them for their paſt ſins, not a reſcue from the dominion of ſin for the future. The apoſtles themſelves retained the ſame notion to the laſt of their Maſter's converſing among them; for when at Emaus they related the ſtory of the crucifixion, they concluded with this reflection, But we truſted it had been he

that

that ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: they were ſo far from having a right faith in the redemption, that they had not a right underſtanding of the word, nor knew that the price of their ranſom was then actually paid.

But allowing as largely as you pleaſe to the choſen people, how ſmall a part were they of mankind! the reſt of whom never heard of the promiſes. And ſince the promulgation of Chriſtianity, there are many nations of Mahometans, heathens and ſavages, where the ſound of it has not been heard, or been loſt again from among them. Add to this that in the midſt of Chriſtendom there are multitudes of children who never arrive at a capacity of actually applying the benefits of the Redemption to themſelves: many grown perſons bred up in ignorance and error, who never had an opportunity of attaining a juſt notion of it: and when we reflect how grievouſly our Religion has been perverted and corrupted by ſome of its moſt zealous votaries, there may have been men of ſerious thought and ſober judgement, who without their own fault, having taken their eſtimate of it from theſe diſguiſes, were excuſable in rejecting it, and ſtand in the caſe of ſuch as never heard of it. If then Chriſt died for all men, and none can fail of receiving the benefits he purchaſed for them without their own wilful negligence: all thoſe above mentioned, who have had no

fair opportunity of embracing his gracious offer muſt be afforded it elſewhere.

And to convince us that it has been afforded elſewhere, let us recollect the principal and moſt authentic of our Creeds, called the Apoſtles, wherein is an article, that Jeſus Chriſt, the only Son, our Lord, deſcended into Hell. What can we underſtand by this deſcent of the united Chriſt into hell or the region of departed ſouls, unleſs that he continued to act there in his filial character upon the human ſoul of Jeſus? But was this agency continued for nothing? or whatever elſe be meant by the deſcent, was it made for no purpoſe? and what other purpoſe can be conceived more worthy, than for compleating thoſe benefits of the Redemption worked here, which could not be conveyed perfectly upon earth.

Then if we conſider the finer and ſmaller compoſition of a vehicular or ſpiritual body, bearing a nearer proportion to the ſphere of the ſpirit's preſence than our preſent groſs bodies, which we move by long ſtrings of complicated engines, wherein are many mechanical motions interfering with our voluntary, and not to be corrected by them without much labour and practice: it will appear probable they are much more manageable, and that the force of example with our endeavours to apply it, may operate more ſtrongly to work new habits: eſpecially if there ſhould be ſuch a ſentient language as

ſuggeſted

ſuggeſted in the Viſion, whereby the very ideas paſſing in our Pattern might be conveyed more exactly and fully than can be done here through any of our ſenſes.

This greater ſuppleneſs of the vehicular nature above the groſs corporeal, may account for the ſhortneſs of the Redeemer's continuance among them: for as much might be done in a day and half there as required three years and halfs' miniſtry here. And as upon earth he left his Apoſtles to tranſmit the benefits of his life and paſſion by their ſucceſſors to the lateſt poſterity; ſo by his example in the Hades, he may have led ſome of the vehicular inhabitants into ſuch perfect habit of endurance and forbearance, as that they might ſerve for examples to all others of the human race, who were diſpoſed to take the benefit of them.

13. No doubt this will be counted a novel doctrine, but novelty alone is no more a ſufficient ground of rejecting than receiving a thing: the cauſe muſt be tried at the bar of ſober reaſon and ſincere piety, and I leave it to the conſideration of every man who is not afraid to entertain a thought, even to the honour of the divine Goodneſs and Equity, that was not taught him by his ſchoolmaſter; whether it does not neceſſarily follow from the article of a univerſal Redemption, purchaſed for all who do not wilfully refuſe or neglect to embrace it, compared with the experience of multitudes

paſſing

paſſing off this worldly ſtage without any poſſibility of embracing it.

Yet there is a very pernicious conſequence may be drawn by ſome who are too ready to turn every thing into a handle for indulging their vicious appetites, which I muſt be careful to obviate. We ſee men wonderfully prone to procraſtination: they put off their repentance from day to day till the hour of death, and will put it off then too, if taught to expect another opportunity afterwards. But they have no juſt room to infer from any thing ſuggeſted above, that they ſhall ever have another: the Scriptures ſo expreſsly declare our condition in the next life dependent upon our conduct here, that nothing but the abſolute neceſſity of ſolving the impartially of our Maker and of our Redeemer, could warrant us to imagine, that an opportunity ſhall be given hereafter to ſuch as had none afforded them here; or a further ſpace allowed ourſelves to run the reſt of our race, which with our utmoſt endeavours and beſt application of our aids, we are not able to finiſh in the body. But with reſpect to us who have had a part of our courſe marked out to us upon earth, if we neglect to run ſo much as we can, the neceſſity ceaſes; for the divine Juſtice ſtands approved in having once made us the offer, nor can we expect ever to be admitted upon the liſts a ſecond time: therefore it ſtill remains true, that as the tree falls ſo it lies.

Children

Children called away before they came to the knowledge of good and evil, have never had their tree of choice and judgement grow at all: ſo it cannot yet have fallen any where. Heathens, ſavages, perſons brought up from their infancy in ignorance, wickedneſs, deluſion and error, or who have had our Religion preſented to them under ſuch diſguiſes as made it appear hideous to common ſenſe and honeſt reaſon, have yet had ſome ſparks of conſcience twinkling in their breaſts: and according as they improved by theſe, their tree lies in a diſpoſition to be tranſplanted into another ſoil, where they may cultivate it to the bearing of ſalutary fruits. But the tree that with the benefit of air, ſunſhine and watering, ſtill continues barren, muſt have contracted a canker by ill management; and can never flouriſh again tranſplanted into any ſoil, but is fit for nothing elſe than to be cut down and caſt into the fire.

As there is a conſtant communication of action between the groſſer and finer parts of our compoſition, it is not improbable, even upon the contemplation of human nature, that vice may work ſuch a foulneſs into the ſpiritual body, as will deſtroy that ſuppleneſs and pliancy to the command of the purely ſpiritual part wherein its health conſiſts, and thereby render it incapable of receiving benefit from any examples or aids whatever which may be afforded.

14. Thus

14. Thus there is good room for Chriſtian charity to hope, that although none can be ſaved unleſs through Chriſt, yet many may be ſaved who, during their abode upon earth, never were in him: for he may have other ſheep which are not yet brought into the fold, ſome to whom it has never yet been opened, and others ſtragglers becauſe they have never heard or never underſtood the call. And the ſame charity will extend the pale of ſalvation to take in all the various ſects of Chriſtians: for our judgements depend upon our natural temperament, our education, the company we have converſed amongſt, the examples we have ſeen, and the manner wherein ſubjects have been propoſed to us; therefore different perſons, of the moſt unbiaſſed ſincerity and honeſt induſtry, will judge variouſly upon the ſame points: but if they carefully live up to the beſt lights afforded them by the diſpenſations of Providence ordinary and extraordinary, they cannot be ranked under the claſs of thoſe, who wilfully neglect to embrace the Redemption offered. Nevertheleſs we are not to imagine it an indifferent thing what ſect or what religion we liſt ourſelves into: for how much ſoever men may be ſaved in all, there is but one only religion and ſect for each particular man wherein he can walk ſecurely.

And this may ſerve to expound the doctrine of the ſtrait-gate; for ſtrait is the gate and narrow

narrow is the way by which each particular man may paſs into life; if he deviates into the broad road among the multitudes, he will find his journey end in deſtruction: nevertheleſs thoſe multitudes may have their ſeveral narrow paths and their wickets through which, if they perſevere in their way, they may find entrance though he could not. For we muſt underſtand every thing in Scripture with a reference to our uſe and our conduct, not to empty ſpeculation.

The queſtion, Are there many that ſhall be ſaved, was probably a matter of mere curioſity, but the anſwer turned it to a more important purpoſe: which we can leaſt of all imagine to be for nouriſhing our ſpiritual pride, and juſtifying our ill nature in exulting at the damnation of multitudes; we ought rather to take it as an alarm to our careleſſneſs and ſpur to our indolence. Strive to enter at the ſtrait-gate, for ſtrait are the gates, and narrow are the ways leading into life, and few there be who find that by which alone you can paſs. There is a certain rule of rectitude for each man ſuited to few others beſides himſelf, which at his utmoſt peril he muſt employ all his circumſpection to diſcern, and all his diligence to purſue.

And we may obſerve the like maxim holds good with reſpect to our ſucceſs in this world: multitudes arrive at a competence of fortune, eaſe,

eaſe, credit and enjoyment by very various ways, but the way that will ſucceed with one man, will anſwer for few others. The ſame labours of hand or brain, hardſhips and dangers, would be faulty in one, which are neceſſary duties and commendations to another: nor is it always eaſy for each to hit upon his right method and ſucceed in it, without careful forethought and continual application. For Providence has ſo interwoven the intereſts of mankind by the diſtribution of talents and opportunities among them, that each has a particular part to act, by the due performance of which he may moſt effectually ſerve himſelf, and his fellow creatures.

15. Nor does there want probability of the like intertexture of intereſts between this world and the next; and that our employments on this preſent ſtage, if rightly purſued, are preparatory to the reſt of our journey through matter, fitting us for the peculiar functions we ſhall have to perform in the communion of ſaints. This ſeems evidenced by the very various allotments made among us here: ſome are but juſt born and die; ſome are bred up in ignorance, error and profligateneſs; ſome have little more underſtanding or capacity of looking up to their Maker than the brutes; and others have been raiſed to extraordinary heights of knowledge and piety that could ſcarce be credited in human nature.

Therefore

Therefore though the promulgation of Chriſtianity upon earth were neceſſary for the human race in general, yet we muſt conclude from the limitation ſet to it by nature and Providence, that it was not neceſſary for every individual: the intereſts of the whole being ſo connected, that the bleſſings imparted to a few would redound to the benefit of many. For our gracious and righteous Father cannot be ſuppoſed ſo very unequally partial in his moſt neceſſary gifts, as his diſpenſations among us here make him appear to have been: but the elect were choſen, not ſo much for their own ſakes, as for channels of conveyance by which the waters of life might be diffuſed among their fellow creatures both in this world and the next. Hence we are all to conſider ourſelves as public perſons, our talents being diſtributed among us with a further view beyond the uſes we can make of them here, and our very virtues given us for the benefit of others jointly with our own: as we have likewiſe an intereſt in theirs, how little ſoever we may ſtand concerned with them at preſent.

This confirms what I have laid down a little before, that obedience to the call of Heaven manifeſted by the talents and ſituation aſſigned us, is our proper rule of conduct: we are not to aſpire at extraordinary atchievements nor degrees of ſanctity above our forces, for we are inſtruments employed in the public ſervice, and

God

God knows what ſervice is wanted from us, what abilities and graces are needful to perform it. He was able of the verieſt ſtones to have raiſed up children unto Abraham; it were a ſmall thing with him to have inſpired into us the zeal of Apoſtles, or the intelligence and ſeraphic piety of Angels; he might have done it with a word, as when he ſaid, Let there be light: be ſure he has given us the endowments requiſite for the part we have to execute in his numerous family of human creatures.

Therefore we need not deſpond or murmur if we cannot riſe to thoſe fervors of Faith and greatneſs of Works whereof we have ſeen or heard examples: for there is a duty of content, even with reſpect to righteouſneſs, not indeed bounded by ſo many limits as in other things. There may be caſes wherein it would be faulty to encreaſe our riches or our reputation though we could, but here the limitation ought only to be ſet by our powers: let us then rather rejoice than repine at them, how ſmall ſoever they be, and be careful to omit no opportunity of improving them; for, ſmall as they are, we ſhall find them one day turn to more important advantages than we can now be aware of.

We may regard this life as a ſchool to fit us for the employments we are to follow in the world: ſome go through the whole ſchool, from thence are forwarded to the univerſity, and put upon different lines of learning; ſome

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are called off in the midway, and others never put to ſchool at all: the parents are the proper judges whether any and what preparation is neceſſary for the life to be engaged in afterwards: but the lad who neglects the rudiments of learning judged requiſite for him, can never regain them afterwards, but muſt prove a worthleſs and miſerable man. So our lengths and courſes of life are wiſely allotted us by our heavenly Father, no doubt with a view to future uſes: ſo that he who has little has no lack, and he who has much has nothing over. We are not to hanker after the works aſſigned to others becauſe we may fancy them more meritorious, but make the beſt improvements we can of our own time and taſks: for if we neglect our rudiments, we ſhall go out into the great world of ſpiritual bodies unfit for any further improvement in the profeſſions we are deſtined to, uſeleſs to the community, and wretched in ourſelves.

16. Therefore as boys are not ſent to ſchool for ſake of the plays and diverſions they find there, although allowed as many as conſiſt with their learning; ſo we are placed in this ſchool of life, not for ſake of the enjoyments abounding here, but to qualify us for a much longer life capable of far greater enjoyments and miſeries: and we may be ſure the line of learning marked out for us by Providence here, is the propereſt to ſuit us for the buſineſs we ſhall

have to follow hereafter. Nevertheleſs our indulgent Father has been pleaſed to make the mental and bodily happineſs of ourſelves and our fellow creatures in this world, the mark of direction for us to aim at; this then we are to promote with all our ſkill and induſtry, being well aſſured that in ſo doing, we ſhall do our beſt towards promoting the intereſts of both in the next.

He has likewiſe hung out many enjoyments within our reach: thoſe then we may thankfully gather, and even contrive for their procurement; uſing the good things of this world as poſſeſſions, not enſlaved by them as captives; laying our meaſures carefully for the morrow, but taking no thought for what their ſucceſs ſhall be on the morrow; pleaſed with ſucceſs when it comes, but not expecting it; enjoying, never indulging the gratifications of appetite; purſuing pleaſures becauſe we approve the purſuit, not becauſe we cannot help it nor live without them; ſubmitting our will to the Will of Heaven, but ſubmitting deſire to the controul of our own will. But he has been pleaſed oftentimes to make labour, trouble and ſelf denial, the road to public and private happineſs: we muſt therefore ſtrike into the rugged road, not becauſe it is rugged, but whenever having that tendency pointed out to us by our own obſervation or rules received from more experienced travellers.

Some

Some exercises of voluntary self-denial are needful to harden our shoulders for the burdens we may have to bear: therefore in the choice of these exercises, we are to regard our situation of life and the works we shall probably be called upon to execute; for obedience is our business, we are to do nothing arbitrarily, nor without the proper call. And in all our difficulties it is our duty and our praise so far to consult present pleasure, as it can be attained by going through them with chearfulness and alacrity: therefore we are voluntarily to engage in those whereof there is a probability we may learn to support them with alacrity, avoiding such as our constitution or natural temper of mind renders us unable ever to go through without galling, for these we are not called to; yet making daily some improvement towards turning things irksome into matters of indifference.

If troubles fall upon us or our dearest friends, greater than we can yet bear without being hurt, they are exercises imposed upon us by our Father for our and their benefit: for there is an endurance of pain, vexation and labour, acquired mechanically by the frequent repetition of them. If we can help ourselves to hasten the acquisition by our own efforts to patience, it is so much the better; yet however acquired, it is an advantage gained: therefore we have reason to kiss the rod, though not to

court it. Nor need we be terrified at the approach of dangers that may befal us, for he will with with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape: not always by warding off the blow, but by enabling to eſcape the evil of it with a firmneſs of mind ſuperior to the preſſure. But wharever improvement of endurance or forbearance we can make any way, is a ſtep towards our adoption and incorporation, whereby we become members of Chriſt, children of God, and denizens of the kingdom of Heaven.

17. For though it be wholeſome and eaſy of conception to the vulgar, it is extremely hard for the man of reflection, to imagine heaven local; that God has a right hand and a left, or that there is any one ſeat nearer to him than another. For God is omnipreſent, alike almighty, great, and glorious, in every point of ſpace: filling the ſuperceleſtial regions, the ſtarry vortices, the depths of the ſea, the bowels of the earth, the manſions of the bleſſed, and habitations of the reprobate. Therefore it is not change of place, but change of condition, that tranſports the creature into heaven. Were our faculties ſo purified and enlarged as that we might ſee God as he is, we ſhould inſtantly find ourſelves at his right hand without ſtirring from our ſeats. On the contrary Milton very judiciouſly deſcribes Satan carrying hell about with him wherever he went: ſo we may ſay that while leading between Ithuriel and Zephon, he

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was in hell and they in heaven; he an outcaſt baniſhed to an immeaſurable diſtance from the preſence of God, they attendant Spirits miniſtring before the throne of glory.

The Scripture abounds in figures and imagery, and blends them promiſcuouſly together in ſuch manner that it is not always eaſy to diſtinguiſh their ſeveral applications: of which we have ſeen inſtances in the laſt Chapter with reſpect to the Son of God, the Logos and the two natures of Chriſt. From hence a handle has been taken for introducing a great deal more of the myſterious and the cabbaliſtical into our Religion than was needful, or then has done it any good. This inaccuracy of ſtile we may preſume was propereſt for the Jews, as being ſuitable to their groſs taſte: but learning being now become more general, and the thoughts of our common Chriſtians having taken a more rational turn, it ſeems eligible to keep our ideas and our expreſſions as clear, as ſteady, and as diſtinct as we can.

Therefore in my humble opinion it might have been as well, if the compilers of our Litany had choſen ſome other form of words inſtead of, Spare thy people whom thou haſt redeemed with thy precious blood; and afterwards, By thine agony and bloody ſweat, by thy croſs and paſſion, by thy precious death and burial, Good Lord deliver us: for our prayers here by the introduction are addreſſed to the holy Trinity, the

one God, to whom theſe expreſſions ſeem ſcarce properly applicable, though they might be to Chriſt. For we are taught to compare the union of the two natures in Chriſt with the vital union of ſoul and body in ourſelves, which together make one man. Therefore the man may claim to himſelf whatever belongs either to his ſoul or body, and I may properly ſay, My underſtanding, my memory, my blood, and my bones; but when we ſpeak of them ſeparately, we cannot apply to one what belongs to the other; for it would be abſurd to talk of my Body's underſtanding, my Body's memory, my Soul's blood, or my Soul's bones; and though I muſt expect to die before many years run out, yet I truſt my ſoul will not die when I do. In like manner it ſeems as great a ſoleciſm in modern language to ſay the blood, the death, the burial of God, notwithſtanding his gracious union with human nature, as it would be to ſpeak of the blood, the death, the burial of a ſoul, notwithſtanding its vital union with body. Had the phraſe run, With the precious blood of thy Chriſt, by the agony and paſſion, and ſo forth, of thy Chriſt, it might have contained as much devotion and piety, and been leſs liable to the cavils of the adverſary.

But it ſometimes happens that men of great learning and true piety, having too much contempt of human reaſon and diſregard of human nature, repeat the words of other good men

paſſing

paſſing before them without exactly weighing their purport; not conſidering that an expreſſion which was perfectly proper for one age, may be injudicious in another: nor ſufficiently ſtudying that text which teaches, that the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive. So that a man may deſtroy himſelf by adhering literally to the Scripture, much more by copying literally the expreſſions of ancient Fathers, and former doctors of the Church.

The Goſpel was preached to the poor, but deſigned for general uſe; therefore delivered in a manner conformable to the ways of thinking which generally prevailed at that time. But it is of great importance to diſtinguiſh between the fundamental doctrines which ought always to be preſerved inviolate, and thoſe accommodated to the conceptions and prejudices of the vulgar, with which we may lawfully take the neceſſary liberties for bringing them ſuitable to the notions current among us at this day. For popular ideas vary greatly in a courſe of time, and inſenſibly take a tincture from the notions and diſcourſes of the learned. The diſcoveries in aſtronomy and other ſciences have given us a very different conception of the ethereal regions from what was entertained of old: and the cuſtom of examining into particulars, and judging for ourſelves, have made us more averſe againſt taking things in the groſs, without being ſhewn a conſiſtency in their ſeveral parts.

Therefore it might be imprudent to preſs upon any man the Aſcenſion of a human body, conſiſting of fleſh, blood, bones, entrails, organs of ſenſation, engines of digeſtion, and engines of diſcharge; and a literal ſeſſion or inhabitancy under that form in a place cloſe by the throne of God, for theſe things might ſtagger many well diſpoſed perſons, and give large handle for diſputation to ſuch as are ready to take hold of it. Perhaps it would not be heterodox to cloſe the work of the Redemption with the deſcent into Hades, aſcribing the Reſurrection, together with all that followed afterwards upon earth, to the power of the Father, not of the Chriſt. For it is not eaſy to conceive how the moſt conſummate rectitude of Will, or power of endurance and forbearance, could enable a human ſoul to re-animate its body, to convey it through the keyhole when the doors were ſhut, and mount up with it into the air.

I do not mean to inſinuate that theſe were nothing more than apparitions, for one cannot underſtand them ſo without wreſting the Scripture violently, eſpecially that appearance wherein Thomas was concerned: but though we cannot deny them to be real facts, we may very conſiſtently with Scripture believe them miraculous facts, wherein God acted in his Paternal, not his Filial character. So that Chriſt was no more the efficient cauſe of his reſurrection, his

entrance

entrance into a close room, or his ascension up into the air in a cloud, than Moses was of the rod turning into a serpent, of water gushing from the rock upon a stroke of his wand, or of quails or manna showering down from the air.

Nor were those miracles any otherwise efficacious towards the Redemption, than the other miracles worked during the ministry of Christ upon earth, given for confirmation of Faith in the beholders, not for operating any thing in the constitution of human nature, or compleating the ransom for sin. And when that purpose was answered, that is, as soon as the ascending body was out of sight, it was disposed of in the same manner as the bodies of other men who are dead and rotten; and the human soul was returned back to Hades, or wherever other souls who partake, or stand in a capacity of partaking in the like righteousness, reside.

Therefore I apprehend it adviseable to leave every man to form his own conception of the session at the right hand of God, the present condition or employment of the Redeemer, and intercession still continued for mortal men: which conception he will form very variously, according to the degree of grossness or refinement of his imagination. For any set of ideas, best suited to his size of comprehension and usual trains of thinking will suffice; provided they satisfy him, that every thing, necessary to be done for his salvation by another, has been fully

fully atchieved; and every assistance requisite for effectuating his endeavours in what still remains to be done by himself, is obtained, and stands ready for him upon his using the methods of applying it prescribed in the gospel: for this I take to be the sole material and fundamental article of Christian Faith.

18. I have now given my idea of the Redemption and other doctrines relative thereto; wherein to my apprehension they stand in the light of a credible and rational scheme, consistent with the knowledge we derive from experience and observation upon human nature. If it should appear in the same light to others, it will be but just that they should take it for the genuine sense of Scripture, and doctrines of the Church: for where expressions are obscure or capable of various interpretations, every private man, much more the dictates of authority, have a right to be understood in the most rational construction. But credibility, and consonance with reason are not of themselves alone sufficient proofs of a doctrine being true, yet these were all that fell properly under my cognisance: for it must be remembered, that my province is human reason, and I cannot pretend to find any positive proofs of the Christian system within its precincts.

It has been said by an eminent pillar of the Church, that the light of nature leads to the necessity of a Redemption, by discovering the corrup-

corruption of the ſoul, depravity of the faculties, and perverſeneſs of the will, which drive us continually into offences againſt the law of God written in our hearts, and thereby render us obnoxious to divine Juſtice without hopes of pardon or being able to ſatisfy it, otherwiſe than by our endleſs puniſhment. But I muſt own that my optics are not clear enough to diſcern theſe things by the light of nature. I ſee plainly that man is prone to evil, our appetites get the maſtery over our reaſon, nor do the beſt of us perſevere in an unerring courſe of righteouſneſs, but offend daily againſt the Will of God manifeſted to us by the contemplation of his works; and I fear theſe offences will draw on their adequate puniſhment: but why the puniſhment or the depravity muſt be perpetual, I do not ſee.

There are thoſe who tell us that the party offended being infinite, the offence and its conſequences muſt be ſo too: but we do not find the ſame rule hold good in offences againſt our fellow creatures upon earth, or that the continuance of the delinquents ſuffering ſhould be proportioned to the length of life of the party injured. In ſetting fines for miſdemeanors, the Court meaſures them by the circumſtances of the offender; nor will the rule of law, ſalvo continemento ſuo, ever permit ſuch to be impoſed as muſt prove his utter ruin: and if an inſult be greater when offered to a king than to a cobler, it is becauſe the public are more concerned

cerned in one caſe than the other. Beſides that ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is no offending againſt God, for we are incapable of doing damage to him, and without damage and a tendency thereto, there is no wrong doing; for an action that can do hurt to nobody, nor leads into other actions that might be hurtful, cannot be evil; but the damage is done or endangered to the creatures, and God for their ſakes exacts the puniſhment for reparation, or prevention of the miſchief.

For he is all goodneſs and mercy, never terminating his views upon evil: as I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that he ſhould turn from his evil ways and live. Therefore when he puniſhes for the evil ways, he does it not in anger, but in loving kindneſs, either to the delinquent, or to other creatures in whoſe intereſts thoſe of the ſufferer are involved, in order to procure ſome good to both, greater than the ſuffering ſuſtained: but endleſs ſuffering leaves no room for good to redound therefrom. We cannot certainly tell in what manner the ſufferings of one creature operate to the benefit of another, but it ſeems to be by ſerving as an overbalance againſt the temptations urging to the like offence as drew them on, and we may be ſure will be adequate to that purpoſe: but it does not from thence appear neceſſary, they muſt be infinite either in weight or duration.

And

And for the depravity of our nature, acknowledged to ſubject us to the actual wickedneſs we daily commit, we were made human creatures either by an immediate creation juſt before our birth, or by ſome law of Providence introducing us into theſe corporeal organizations we inhabit: and the ſame Power which for wiſe and gracious purpoſes has placed us here, is able to place us in a more favourable ſituation, where we may have ſtrength of will to purſue invariably ſuch portion of underſtanding, as he ſhall pleaſe to allot us. Nor ſince univerſal Nature, with all her courſes and minuteſt motions, were planned out by the Almighty, can we deny that this improvement of our condition may be effected by ſtated laws of his eſtabliſhment; neither that the ſame laws may have furniſhed us with the natural forces to work out that little pittance of righteouſneſs it was his deſign we ſhould attain in this life, without the ſupernatural aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit; of which, though we have many pretences, we have no certain or rational evidences among us, other than what are drawn from the ſacred records.

Therefore I muſt rank the Redemption with all belonging to it, the Incarnation, the Interceſſion, effuſions of the holy Ghoſt, eternity and extremity of puniſhment, among thoſe additions in the republication of the law of nature which were not contained in the firſt edition; as being never diſcoverable by human reaſon, nor could

could ever have been known otherwiſe than from Revelation, and thoſe miraculous events that were the teſtimonials of it: So I muſt deliver over my Catechumen to the divines, to whoſe province it belongs to lay before him the poſitive proofs of a Revelation having been actually given, and of the truths recorded in ſacred ſtory: having firſt prepared him for their reception, by ſhewing their credibility, and that they may be underſtood in a ſenſe which carries no repugnance to human reaſon.

I would deſire him to conſider further, whether upon the foregoing repreſentation it does not appear, that Chriſtianity contains all that rectitude of ſentiment and conduct, which it is the uſe and aim of the beſt Philoſophy to lead men into; and then let him reflect, whether he can find examples in hiſtory of any ſyſtem of Philoſophy having anſwered its end ſo effectually among mankind: from whence he may diſcern it to be a beneficial thing, even before he ſees it proved a true one. Some few ſages of uncommon capacity and uninterrupted leiſure, have run extraordinary lengths of knowledge and virtue, and ſpread them among their followers of the like contemplative turn: but who of them ever found a ſyſtem of general or national uſe? which could rouze the thoughtleſs, warm the flegmatic, reſtrain the impetuous, diſcipline the unruly, bring the vulgar, the ſimple, the giddy and the buſy, to think of the things above,

above, to look for an inheritance in a better country, and make preparation for the future health and vigour of their ſpiritual body.

As to us who were born in a Chriſtian country, and had our education formed upon that plan, if we fancy ourſelves able to do every thing by our own ſkill and proweſs, ſtill it would become us to reflect from what ſources this ſufficiency was derived. Were Chriſtianity to be univerſally diſcredited and exploded, perhaps my own morality and tenour of conduct would remain the ſame it is: but had that been exploded before I was born, I am far from thinking I ſhould ever have attained the little judgement and philoſophy for which I now am thankful. For that importance of right opinion and practice, inculcated into me by the nurſe and the prieſt, firſt made me a Search: and put me upon exerting my faculties with caution and induſtry in the diſcovery of ſome things they could not teach me.

Therefore to uſe a homely ſaying, we have reaſon to ſpeak well of the bridge we have gone over: and it would be an unpardonable ſelfiſhneſs, if becauſe we think ourſelves ſafely landed upon firm ground, we ſhould careleſsly ſuffer the bridge to be broken down in prejudice of other paſſengers, who may be as little able as ourſelves to ſtem the torrent of youthful paſſions and faſhionable follies, or wade through the mud of indolence, with the ſlender ſtaff of

unripened

unripened reason. Having examined some of the principal arches of the bridge supporting the doctrinal part, I proceed next to the practical, composed of three principal compartiments: for as the whole of moral philosophy has been usually divided into the cardinal Virtues; so all the duties of the Gospel are comprehended under the theological Virtues, stiled Faith, Hope, and Charity.

CHAP. XV.

Faith.

DESCEND celestial Graces, sacred Triad, stedfast Faith, all-soothing Hope, and serenity-smiling Charity. Your passage now lies easy since when the gates lift up their heads, the everlasting doors of Heaven were opened, and the King of glory came down to succour lost mankind. He came in three distinguished characters: the Father awakening our slothful faculties by signs and wonders; the Son opening a way to happiness by setting a perfect pattern of endurance and forbearance; and the holy Ghost invigorating our endeavours by his imperceptible assistance to copy the great example.

The almighty Agent in this triple character has rescued us from the thraldom of our nature, evidenced

evidenced by Adam's tranſgreſſion; he has led captivity captive, and given gifts to men; he has ſubdued all our enemies under us: the laſt enemy ſubdued was Death, that king of terrors, whoſe grim aſpect uſed to embitter all the joys of life. But now, O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave, where is thy victory? the ſting of death is ſin: but you, angelic ſiſters, brighteſt among the train of the king of glory when he paſſed the everlaſting gates, choiceſt among the gifts he gave to men, ſhall ſhield us from the point of that ſting.

You bear the panoply of God, proof againſt all aſſaults: for whomſoever you ſhould fit therewith compleatly, he need not fear the approach of moral evil, nor preſſure of what natural evil Providence ſhall judge needful for him to bear. It is by your enlivening energy alone, that we can become new creatures, that our affections can be raiſed from groveling in the mire of ſordid appetite, our underſtandings enlightened to diſcern the things above, our hearts united in perfect harmony to purſue one common intereſt as members of the ſame body, our views enlarged to regard ourſelves as citizens of the univerſe, our mortal made to put on immortality, and our clay-built tabernacles ſublimed into fit temples of the holy Ghoſt, wherein we have promiſe that the Father and the Redeemer will come unto us and make their abode with us.

Draw near, ethereal Virtues, ſhed your benign influence upon me, purge my mental eye, diſpel the miſts of prejudice and error; that I may behold diſtinctly your ſhapes and features, and faithfully deſcribe them to ſuch as will lend an attentive ear. Nor diſdain to approach for that I have brought a train of earth-born goddeſſes to receive you, natives of philoſophic land, daughters of human Reaſon: for he too claims his deſcent from heaven, and bears the candle of the Lord in teſtimony of his divine original. His faireſt daughters theſe, the Virtues ſtiled Cardinal, heretofore eſteemed four, but in my ſearches by the light of nature appearing five. Is it preſumption that I attempt to join heaven and earth in amicable concord? for both were works of one almighty Power, both correſpondent parts of the ſame all-comprehenſive plan.

Behold the celeſtial Graces condeſcend to take hands with thoſe of mortal growth! behold how aptly they aſſociate in the mingled dance! how firmly Prudence treads upon the ſolid ground that Faith has marked! Prudence whoſe features divided among the other ſiſters, make them all ſeem but her under various forms; and Faith, on whoſe ſtrong ſhoulders the two other Graces lean. Fortitude and Temperance follow moſt ſteadily, where led by ſure and certain Hope. Juſtice never quits the train of unreſerved Charity, and Benevolence is her very likeneſs, as much

much as mortal production can approach divine.

But first thee, Faith, introductress of thy companions, thee first let me survey, thy strong-knit muscles capable of removing mountains, thy hardy constitution unhurt by toils and labours, unappalled by dangers, unvanquished by the fiery trial. In thy mirror thou exhibitest the perfect image of things invisible to mortal ken, with thy telescope thou bringest remotest objects near the eye. Thou evidence of things not seen, thou present sense of distant joys, and earnest of happiness kept in store for thy followers. Thou takest thy seat upon a rock, the solid ground of rational piety is the ground thou lovest to walk upon, honest enquiry and sober freedom are the pioneers to plain the way before thee, experience and contemplation of the Attributes the pavement whereon thou canst most securely tread.

The airy fabric of superstition and unthinking zeal will not support thy weight: there wanders there a Phantome, aukward mimic of thy port and likeness, followed by a fallacious Hope and narrow-minded Charity: the hollow figure bears the semblance of thy vigour and robust complexion, but contains no nerves nor solid substance. She feeds on dreams and fairy tales, old legends, juggling tricks, and such fantastic food: she talks in an imperious tone and confident air, but fails in time of trial: she

ſtands ever at variance with Reaſon, whoſe piereing eye and potent graſp are her greateſt dread; ſo ſhe hoodwinks her zealots that they may never meet his glance, and terrifies them with menaces that they may fly from his approach,

This the dim-ſighted Free-thinker miſtakes for thee, whom he charges with her abſurdities and follies: ſo he draws his keen-edged weapon Ridicule, lays manfully about him, and thinks to make a merit with Reaſon by an aid that does him no real ſervice: for he is too eager of victory to diſtinguiſh friend from foe, or examine calmly what it is that he attacks.

But let us proceed with better care and circumſpection, obſerve attentively thy countenance and make, the conſtruction of thy frame, the texture of thy joints, and ground thou ſtandeſt upon, that we may neither draw thee diſfigured by any foreign mixtures, nor give them an undeſerved credit by being introduced as parts of thy compoſition.

2. In the current notion of Faith, it is apprehended to be an aſſent of the mind to ſome propoſition, or a conviction of its truth; which whoever admits is deemed to have the virtue of Faith, and whoever denies is condemned as an infidel. The zealots of all ſorts underſtand it ſo, which makes them value themſelves upon their orthodoxy, and think hardly

hardly of every one who does not admit the diſtinguiſhing tenets of their particular religion or ſect. The Freethinker underſtands it ſo too, and therefore will not allow commendation due to any body for his opinions: nor could we find fault with his inference if his premiſes were right. For againſt the merit of faith in this idea of it there lies a very juſt objection, namely, that it is no virtue at all: for virtue muſt be an act of our own, the work of our own induſtry, and conſequence of our volition; but aſſent is involuntary, it is an act of the underſtanding not of the will, wherein the mind is purely paſſive, receiving ſuch judgements as the objects exhibited caſt upon her. For you cannot help ſeeing that two and two make four, nor can you aſſent to their making five by any power you poſſeſs: neither if you want clearneſs of thought to follow Euclid in all the proceſs of a theorem, can you aſſent to the demonſtration how juſtly ſoever it be carried on.

Therefore if two heathens of equal capacity, but different ways of thinking, had the ſame arguments laid before them proving Jeſus to be the Chriſt; ſhould one ſtand convinced and the other not, the former might be the more fortunate, but not the more virtuous man upon that account. This I think can hardly be denied by any body, ſuppoſing both to come with the ſame honeſt deſire of learning the truth, to con-

ſider the evidences produced fairly and impartially, and to have no wilful prejudice or paſſion caſting their weights into the ſcale. But this is not always the caſe: what then if our unconverted heathen failed of conviction becauſe he ſhut his eyes againſt the evidences propoſed, ſo that they could not work their due effect upon his judgement, was he not blameable? Certainly, to a high degree: but his fault was of another kind than want of faith; it was want of ſincerity, want of a proper regard to his reaſon and intereſts: for there are varieties of faults, and a man may be charged unjuſtly with one, though he were really guilty of another. There are ſome able and induſtrious workmen a little too fond of liquor: if one of theſe intoxicates himſelf ſo as to become incapable of finiſhing the day's work he has to do, he deſerves your cenſure for intemperance, but not for idleneſs; for no man can be counted idle becauſe he omits to do what he was not capable of doing. So when a man ſhuts his eyes againſt the truth, the blame lay in ſhutting his eyes, not in that he did not ſee when they were ſhut, for this it was impoſſible for him to do; and the fault was owing to a wrong turn of mind previous to the failure of conviction you complain of.

On the other hand, the commendation belonging to him that was convinced, was due to his behaviour preparatory to the conviction, while he was yet as much an infidel as his partner:

partner: therefore his honeſt attention, which is all you have to praiſe him for, could not be deemed an exerciſe of the virtue of faith, but of ſome other virtue. And I believe it may be ſafely laid down in general, that conviction of a truth unacknowledged before never is itſelf an act of virtue, though it may be the reward and fruits of ſome virtue the man had before conviction. Hence it appears the eſſence of faith does not conſiſt in aſſent to certain truths propoſed, nor in eaſineſs of conviction upon good and ſolid reaſons: I grant that where good and ſolid reaſons will not move, it indicates ſomething vicious in the character; but then it is a vice of another ſpecies than infidelity: wherefore we muſt ſeek elſewhere than in conviction for the proper bottom whereon to place the eſſence of faith.

3. We have taken notice upon ſeveral occaſions, that a Man is not entirely a rational, but a ſenſitivo-rational animal, guided by Underſtanding and Imagination jointly: and in Chap. XII, XIII. of the firſt Volume, have endeavoured to aſcertain the diſtinction between thoſe two faculties. His motions for the moſt part are actuated and his purpoſes executed by appetite, deſire, moral ſenſe, habit, perſuaſion, and all the family of imagination; the office of underſtanding lies only in recommending the purpoſes, and even in the choice of them it muſt proceed upon motives and principles ſuggeſted

by the other faculty. Therefore it is of the utmoſt importance to have a well-diſciplined imagination, habituated to run in the tracks that reaſon has pointed out: for reaſon is a ſlow mover, not quick enough to keep our active powers in play, nor vigorous enough to ſurmount any obſtacle, until uſe and expertneſs have made the practice eaſy.

Hence it is that the dictates of reaſon have ſo little effect upon our conduct, unleſs ſome appetite or deſire can be brought to co-operate with them: and the virues do not receive their eſſence compleatly, until they are grown into appetites. Let a glutton be ever ſo well convinced of the deſireableneſs of temperance, and reſolve upon the practice, he will keep his reſolution no longer than while he can hold the good conſequences of temperance in contemplation, and behold them with more ſatisfaction than the preſent gratification of his vicious appetite: in which caſe it is not temperance he deſires, but its benefits; for the ultimate point in view is always to be deemed our motive of action, not any intermediate ſteps diſcerned neceſſary to attain it. But all this while he has not the virtue of temperance, he has only what the ancients called the inchoation of virtue, wherein ſhe is in her embryo ſtate, not yet compleatly herſelf, nor fully formed. When by frequent contemplation of the conſequences, ſatisfaction becomes transferred from the end

to

to the means, ſo that deſire can faſten upon acts of temperance immediately on being preſented to the thought, then it is he begins to have the virtue of temperance.

For it is of the very eſſence of virtue, that ſhe have force enough to draw us to the purſuit of her for her own ſake: whatever other conſiderations firſt made her amiable, they muſt be dropped out of ſight before ſhe can arrive at her full ſtature; for while they remain in view, the acts we perform may be intereſt, may be prudence, or piety, or acts of ſome other virtue, but not exerciſes of that particular virtue whereto they ſeem to belong.

But in all appetite or deſire of which every genuine well-formed virtue is a ſpecies, there is an aſſent or perſuaſion of the mind that the action ſuggeſted will prove ſatisfactory in the performance: and this perſuaſion riſes inſtantly upon thought of the action, without thought of any thing further to recommend it: ſo that in every deſire there is a perſuaſion, not always worked by reaſon, but diſcerned intuitively by ſenſe and apprehenſion, and the ſtrength and efficacy of the deſire depends upon the degree of perſuaſion: which gave occaſion for ſome to lay down, that happineſs is made by opinion. But there are ſome aſſents, which though not immediately raiſing deſire, yet are of neceſſary uſe to direct us where to place and how to attain it: for a competent ſtock of uſeful knowledge

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is as requisite to our well-being as a useful turn of inclination: but this knowledge to be serviceable, must be so strongly imprinted in the imagination as to appear in its full colours upon inspection, otherwise it will rest in empty speculation, having no influence upon our conduct.

In Chap. XIII. above referred to, I have distinguished between conviction and persuasion: the first is worked by arguments evincing a truth, and while we have those arguments ready in mind, we may satisfy ourselves of the truth at any time by contemplating them; but the recollecting them is a work of some time and reflection, nor can be performed always whenever we may want the truth for our direction. But by frequently holding the evidences in view, assent will at length become transferred from the premisses to the conclusion, as well as desire from the end to the means: from thenceforward conviction grows into persuasion, and the truth becomes a judgement of the mind discerned by sense and apprehension, not a deduction of reason, and operates as a principle of action. Thus both assent and desire may, by care and diligence, be brought to fix upon objects without the intervention of any thing else to connect them, and as when desire has been thus habituated to prompt to laudable actions without view of the profits recommending them, this constitutes the essence of a virtue;

so

ſo when aſſent has been inured to riſe ſpontaneouſly upon the idea of certain uſeful and practical truths, though unaccompanied by the evidences enforcing them, this bears the ſame characteriſtic, and as well merits the title of a virtue as the other.

4. Perſuaſions of the imagination commonly accompany the convictions of underſtanding ſo long as the evidences working them can be retained in their full colours, but not always: for where there was any prior perſuaſion contrary to them, it will ſtruggle a long while before it will give way to the ſtrongeſt conviction. Hence comes the ſo uſual expreſſion, I could ſcarce believe my own eyes, when people ſee any thing diſcordant from their former ideas: and we often find a difficulty in perſuading ourſelves of a matter, after having ſeen convincing proofs that it muſt be true. We all now agree that the Sun ſtands ſtill and the Earth moves round him in her annual orbit: yet we cannot imagine the quiet bed we repoſe on to run hundreds of miles in a minute. Arguments have been produced to prove irrefragably, that the compacteſt bodies upon earth contain more of pore than ſolid ſubſtance: yet our ordinary perſuaſions concerning wood and ſtone and glaſs, and other hard bodies, repreſent them to us as perfect ſolids, And the very epithet applied to the motion of light, which we call an incredible

velocity,

velocity, ſhows that imagination cannot always follow the fulleſt conviction of reaſon.

But in many caſes, thoſe too of no ſmall importance, although perſuaſion does accompany conviction while reaſon can hold up the neceſſary lights, it will not ſtay a moment after they are withdrawn. When retired to our cloſets we give full and fair ſcope to reflection, we can ſatisfy ourſelves of many truths that would be of excellent ſervice to us for directing our conduct: but when we enter into action, at which time their influence is moſt wanted, we find the perſuaſion of them gone; not perhaps that they are loſt out of our memory, but appear there as ſpeculative fancies without any ſolid foundation, nor can we always recall them again in their full colours even in our hours of leiſure.

How many people, thoroughly convinced of their being no reality in Ghoſts and Apparitions, yet cannot lay aſide their fears in the dark? but fear implies a perſuaſion of ſomething miſchievous really at hand. How many people carry away a perſuaſion from ſermons or good books, which they cannot retain in vigour to the next day? Tully tells us that while he had Plato's Dialogues before him, he was always aſſuredly perſuaded of the immortality of the ſoul: but when he laid his book aſide, doubts began to ariſe, and his perſuaſion dwindled away by degrees

gives into nothing. We hear continually from the pulpit, that though there are few ſpeculative Atheiſts now in the world, there are multitudes of practical Atheiſts; that is, perſons who have not God in their thoughts, unleſs when you put them in mind, for then they will readily and ſincerely acknowledge his Being, his Power, his Holineſs and his Juſtice. Theſe people do not want arguments to convince their underſtanding: they want only to have their conviction take ſuch ſtrong hold on their imagination, as that the impulſe of ſenſitive objects may not loolen nor perpetually drive it out of ſight. And it is a common complaint, that men do not live up to what they know: we all live up to our perſuaſions, but they do not always follow our knowledge. For our preſent judgements ſucceſſively ſhape every turn in the windings of our conduct, but they continually fluctuate or vary in form and colour; nor can thoſe which were the reſult of our cleareſt knowledge, maintain a ſteady ſeat in the mind without being diſplaced or changed by others, thrown in mechanically from external objects, former habits, example or company.

Therefore Faith is an habitual uninterrupted perſuaſion of truths that have been manifeſted ſuch to our underſtanding: as Superſtition may be defined, a retaining perſuaſions after reaſon has plainly ſhown them erroneous.

Hence

Hence comes the diſtinction ſo frequently inſiſted on in Scripture between a dead and a lively faith: the former is but a nominal faith or theory, the latter alone a real one and a virtue. For when an important article is become a judgement of the mind, appearing there as a ſelf-evident truth, riſing ſpontaneouſly with a ſtrong unreſerved aſſent without waiting for reflection to evince it; then and not till then it will operate as a practical principle of action, and have its weight in determining our minuteſt motions; but nothing that is not practical can be uſeful or a virtue, nor placed to the credit ſide of our account.

5. But though faith be generated by conviction, and then not ſo much by ſtrength of the evidences contributing towards it as by the reiterated contemplation of them in our thoughts, it is often produced by other cauſes. It is well known, the continual chimings of a ſect or party among whom a man is conſtantly converſant, will inſenſibly draw him into their notions, without aid of any argument or application to his reaſon. For example and ſympathy have a ſurprizing effect upon the imagination, and evil communications will inevitably corrupt good principles, as well as good manners. Education too, authority and cuſtom furniſh us with many of our perſuaſions, which we take currently upon the credit of others, who have

have delivered them to us with confidence as certain truths.

Nor do mechanical cauſes prove inſufficient to affect the ſtate of our opinions; ſtrong liquors will raiſe hopes and give a man a confidence in his powers, he never could have attained by ſober reaſon: diſeaſes, thoſe eſpecially of the bilious and phlegmatic kind, render us unable to entertain a thought of the beſt atteſted pleaſurable truths. I do not know whether I ſhall be counted whimſical, but I cannot help owning, I find in myſelf that indigeſtion, eaſt winds, or an air diſpoſed to thunder, make a conſiderable alteration of colour in the articles of my creed; nor can I then behold ſome of the moſt important truths of Religion, nor grounds of truſting in the divine Providence, nor duties of humanity and benevolence, with the ſame vigour of aſſent as at other times, when the machine is in perfect order. For crudities in the juices will often quench the Spirit by chilling and ſtagnating the blood; and I have experienced more than once that a ſip of Daffy's elixir in the morning riſing has proved a powerful means of Grace, diſpelling doubts and deſpondencies, reſtoring Faith to its former ſtrength and brightneſs. Hence thoſe weakly pious people who diſturb themſelves for that they cannot raiſe a fervent glow of faith whenever they pleaſe, may learn that this is impracticable, as depending upon cauſes not

under

under their command: therefore the gloom arising therefrom being not imputable to them, they ought to rest contented with their situation, expecting a better opportunity to improve their faith at seasons when their bodily humours and all external circumstances shall be more favourable. They may laudably do what they can to help themselves, but for that purpose might better have recourse to their horse or their apothecary, then to their gospel-minister: for air, exercise, proper regimen of diet and aperients may relieve them; but upon these occasions, pathetic lectures, long prayers, and indefant hymn-singings will be more likely to prove quenchers than quickners of the Spirit, to stupify than enliven their faith.

But though these impediments last mentioned are temporary, and only suspend but do not destroy our habitual persuasions, our faith being not dead but a sleep in the interval; yet I apprehend our natural temperament, education, and company, give a permanent turn to our opinions. From hence it follows, that our faith, as well as our other virtues, are in a great measure given us without our own endeavours to co-operate in the acquisition, being wholly derived from sources turned upon us by Providence. Many people are made equitable and benevolent, industrious and temperate, by the examples and instructions laid before them: and many entertain just and sound notions upon the

the moſt important ſubjects inculcated into them by others, without ever having diſcovered the truth of them by their own obſervation.

Nevertheleſs theſe habits, both of deſire and perſuaſion, are valuable poſſeſſions, however obtained: wherefore it behoves us to ſpread them among our neighbours as far as we are able, by rational conviction if we can, if we cannot, then by authority, by exhortation, by example, by ſympathy, by the paſſions, or whatever other method ſhall be found moſt feaſible: and to improve thoſe we have ourſelves from whatever ſources our good fortune has thrown them upon us; adding to them ſuch others as we find wanting in our character, by careful and aſſiduous exerciſes of our reaſon, and by the practice of forms, ceremonies, cuſtoms and inſtitutions ſuitable to the purpoſe. For imagination is a faculty we poſſeſs in common with the brutes, and like them muſt be diſciplined with management and artifice; which then is honeſt artifice, when directed by an honeſt deſign and to a laudable purpoſe.

But the grand ſtrengthener of faith and every other virtue is a behaviour conformable thereto; for nothing like practice to rivet any principle of action in our minds. A man may improve his courage more by one campaign than by any lectures he can receive upon fortitude, and confirm himſelf in his Religion by ſome difficult

obedience to its dictates better than by all the arguments or meditations in the world. For my part, I place little dependence upon my moral ſpeculations, while remaining in ſpeculation alone, how carefully ſoever I have endeavoured to connect them: but if ſomething occurs in real life wherein I can exemplify them in my conduct, I find it gives them an additional weight in my judgement, though without one additional reaſon to thoſe whereon I had founded them. Nor do the effects of practice terminate in the particular principle prompting thereto, but extend to all others connected therewith: it is this makes faith grow like a grain of muſtard ſeed, and ſhoot out all its branches until it becomes a tree ſpreading over the whole character and conduct: and by this may be explained that text which ſays, To him that hath ſhall be given, and from him that hath not ſhall be taken away even that which he hath.

6. We have ſeen that faith is an habitual perſuaſion, therefore perſuaſion is the genus whereof faith is the ſpecies: for it is obvious there are multitudes of perſuaſions which do not deſerve that appellation. Not but that we often apply it in common diſcourſe to any favourite perſuaſion, as when we ſay, that ſuch a one has great faith in Ward's pill or James's powder, or Berkley's tar water, for curing all diſtempers;

pers; or in changes of the weather-glaſs, or ſqualings of peacocks for prognoſticating the weather: but here the word is uſed figuratively, for nobody imagines theſe things to rank among the virtues. It remains then to enquire by what characteriſtic to diſtinguiſh this particular kind of perſuaſion we have been ſpeaking of. Now to make a perſuaſion faith, I conceive it muſt be of ſome important propoſition, it muſt relate to ſome matter of Religion, it muſt be ſtrong, and it muſt have a rational foundation.

Let a man believe ever ſo firmly that all diſeaſes proceed from ſwarms of imperceptible animals breeding within us, this, though grounded on ever ſo good reaſons, is only a ſpeculative opinion, it cannot be faith for want of importance; for it will make no difference in his manner of treating diſeaſes or regulating his own diet and regimen. If he believes conſtant exerciſe, or phyſic every ſpring and fall neceſſary, it may be of great importance to his health: yet theſe are not faith, becauſe matters of common prudence not of Religion or duty.

If he believe the practice of religious and moral duties his trueſt intereſt, ſo far as to give a ready ſincere aſſent whenever put in mind of it; but it lies ſo light upon his thoughts as never to occur ſpontaneouſly without being ſuggeſted by ſomebody elſe, or if it riſes in ſuch faint colours as to be eclipſed by every dazzle of worldly profit or ſenſual appetite; he may have a nomi-

nal, but has not a real or lively faith, which can be of any avail to him, or influence his actions: for it is the ſpontaneity and vividneſs of faith that give it life, activity and efficacy, and conſtitute it a virtue. But habit contributes more to nouriſh up this vigour than argument: it is the office of reaſon to direct us what we are to believe, but when we know this, the buſineſs is not half done, for frequent contemplation, proper diſcipline, and other means of faith muſt give us that full and habitual perſuaſion wherein the virtue conſiſts.

And experience ſufficiently teſtifies what mighty force there is in an inveterate perſuaſion: the invincible conſtancy of the primitive Chriſtians, the ſlaviſh drudgeries of the Papiſts, the tedious attendances and ſelf-denials of the Methodiſts, the whimſical auſterities of the Indian Fouqhars, ſhew to what incredible lengths a ſtrongly impreſſed notion will carry men; and make us ſenſible of how vaſt importance it is, to turn this powerful engine of human nature into right and ſalutary courſes. Therefore we may eaſily imagine, that Faith, when grown to full maturity of ſtrength, may remove mountains of vice and indolence, ſubdue the ſtrongeſt appetites, undergo the moſt grievous labours, face the moſt formidable dangers, and paſs unhurt through the ſevereſt fiery trials; nor can any thing elſe aſſiſt us effectually upon ſuch difficult occaſions.

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For we may obſerve that all thoſe inſtances of perſuaſion above ſpecified were generated, except the firſt, and that perhaps was greatly aided, not by application to the underſtanding but imagination, not to the head but to the heart, by example, by cuſtom, by cenſure, by applauſe, by poſitive aſſertion, by continual harpings upon the ſame ſtring, by working upon the paſſions: and theſe engines might as effectually be employed to good purpoſes as perverted to bad ones, were but men of parts as induſtrious in ſtudying the ſcience of honeſt artifice, as of ſelfiſh craft and cunning. The chief uſe of popular diſcourſes upon topics of Religion and morality I take to be, not ſo much to inſtruct, as to warm, to encourage, to inculcate perſuaſion: for a man may be taught what he ought to do with much leſs time and trouble, than what he has learned can be nouriſhed up into a vigorous principle of action.

7. I have laid down as one ingredient in the eſſence of faith, that it ought to have a rational foundation, nevertheleſs I do not apprehend it always neceſſary that foundation ſhould be firſt laid in the reaſon of the party believing: for this would be impracticable, becauſe the ſuperſtructure is often wanted for uſe, where there is not this ground in being whereon to reſt it. The neceſſary proceſs of education ſhews, that you muſt begin with inculcating perſuaſions before there is any compaſs of reaſon affording an

opening to build upon: and many grown perſons, either through the narrowneſs of their capacity, or avocations of their profeſſion, never can be fully inſtructed in the reaſons whereon you ſupport the truths it is highly requiſite for them to be perſuaded of. Therefore it is in vain to think of doing every thing by rational conviction, nor need one ſcruple to inſtil right and wholeſome perſuaſions by ſuch other methods as appear likely to ſucceed.

Nevertheleſs I would have as much uſe made of reaſon as it would yield, nor adviſe any man to raiſe perſuaſions in another whereof he does not ſee grounds himſelf to think they will prove ſalutary to the receiver, nor to omit making thoſe grounds viſible to his underſtanding, ſo far as it can bear. For we ought to conſider ourſelves as public perſons, our various talents given us for the general ſervice; and ſince ſome want ſtrength and opportunity to reaſon for themſelves, thoſe who have the faculty cleareſt ought to employ it honeſtly and ſedulouſly for the benefit of others in whom it falls deficient: ſo that no perſuaſions may prevail, which were not originally introduced by the rational conviction of ſomebody or other. And with reſpect to thoſe perſuaſions we find already engrafted in ourſelves before we firſt arrived at a competent uſe of our reaſon, it will become us to examine them carefully thereby, and trace them down to their ſolid foundations, that ſo we may be able

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to give a reaſon for the faith that is in us: for this will enable us to make a more judicious application of them to our conduct, to ſettle the precedence among them where they ſeem to interfere, and prevent their running into extravagancies, headlong zeal, or righteouſneſs overmuch.

Beſides, we may ſometimes find cauſe to eradicate ſuch of them as ſtood upon hollow ground: for perſuaſions inculcated by education or infuſed by cuſtom, having been tranſmitted through many hands, may receive a little change in every ſtep of their paſſage; ſo that by the aggregate of theſe changes, it is poſſible that from ſolid and ſalutary they were at firſt, they may come in time to be trivial or pernicious: nor are there not ſome among them which were calculated upon the characters and circumſtances of times, which being different now, though they might be highly expedient two hundred years ago, they may become uſeleſs incumbrances upon us at preſent.

But though I would exhort every man to build as much as he can upon reaſon, let it be remembered, when he does build for himſelf, it muſt be upon his own reaſon, for he cannot ſee with another's eyes: he may indeed, and often ought, to truſt another for what he does not ſee himſelf, but then he may judge of the other's veracity, and probability of the truth recommended. It cannot be expected that every man

ſhould be a philoſopher, a theologian, or a metaphyſician: but if he cannot chooſe his doctrines for himſelf, he may chooſe his teachers, and obſerve ſomething in their conduct and manner of proceeding that ſhall give him a little inſight into their character. God has given him ſome ſhare of diſcretion, and expects he ſhould improve it to help himſelf therewith: nor need he lie under anxiety for the event, for one of the moſt wholeſome perſuaſions is that of a perfect truſt in the diſpenſations of Providence. The ſize of his talent was of divine appointment, and God knows what portion of underſtanding was proper for him, and how to produce good out of his weakneſs: therefore let him uſe the beſt judgement he has, and if he fall into miſtake, it will be a happy miſtake, provided it be involuntary, and not owing to his own miſmanagement, or negligence.

8. When I required that faith ſhould have a foundation in reaſon, it might ſeem to follow that this foundation muſt lie upon the ground of truth: but this is not to be underſtood ſo ſtrictly, as that a man may not in any minute inſtance connive at the reception of an article he does not believe himſelf. It will be urged that ſound reaſon muſt always ſtand upon truth, and ſo indeed it does ultimately but not always, without the intervention of ſomething elſe as a cuſhion between: ſchoolmen allow, and divines ſometimes employ what they call arguments to

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the man, when they uſe ſuch as they think will weigh with the hearer, although having no credit with themſelves; but then the concluſion they would prove to him thereby, ought to be a real truth in their own judgement, or they act diſhoneſtly. In like manner if you would bring a man into a perſuaſion you judge in your own mind to be juſt and beneficial to him, you may lawfully put in uſe other perſuaſions leading thereinto which you do not hold yourſelf, provided you cannot effect your honeſt purpoſe upon him by rational conviction: for in this caſe the end ſanctifies the means. For we have ſeen in the courſe of theſe enquiries, that uſe and expedience is the proper end whereto all our proceedings are to be directed: both opinions and practices are beſt when they tend to generate a happy temper of mind, and make us induſtrious in promoting happineſs as well in ourſelves as in others. Therefore when we have ſettled what perſuaſions conduce moſt effectually to this deſirable purpoſe, we may laudably enforce them by ſuch methods as we find feaſible, if theſe are not feaſible which we would chooſe.

It cannot be denied an article of the utmoſt importance, that our thoughts and words and actions here, will affect our condition hereafter; and to enſure the belief of this it is vulgarly ſuppoſed that books are kept in heaven, wherein are exactly minuted down all the tranſactions that paſs upon earth. Now let ſome refined

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ſpeculatiſt be ſcandalized at the thought of Angels writing with pen and ink in books, or the need of a formal trial and judgement, imagining the ſame purpoſe may be anſwered as well by an apt connection of cauſes with effects eſtabliſhed at the beginning among the laws of nature, he will never be able to make his connection intelligible to the vulgar: therefore if he deprives them of their books and their after-reckoning, he will leave them no perſuaſion at all to hinder them from indulging their own follies and vices, without fear of any damage to enſue therefrom.

Another very material article of faith is the government of Providence over all ſublunary affairs as well moral as natural, ordinarily imagined to be adminiſtered by perpetual interpoſitions among the motions of matter, inſtinct of animals, and actions of men, made either by immediate exertions of Omnipotence, or operation of inviſible ſpirits peculiarly commiſſioned thereto. But if any man, wiſer than ordinary, ſhall fancy it contrary to reaſon, that ſuperior orders of Being ſhould be employed in our little concerns, or that the wheels of Providence ſhould be ſo unſkilfully put together as to need continual rectifying every day by the hand of the artiſt, yet why ſhould he diſturb mankind in their conceptions without which they cannot comprehend how the errors of chance, and miſchiefs of human perverſeneſs, can be pre-

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vented, or any government of the world carried on?

The divine reſidence ſomewhere above the clouds, the far-ſtretching eye of Providence piercing through the thickeſt walls and roofs and coverings, into the ſecret chambers of darkneſs, the peculiar preſence of God in places ſet apart to his worſhip, and that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midſt of them, may be thought matters of ſcoffing by ſome who cannot believe the Deity local, nor that he has any remote objects to behold, any coverings to pierce through, as being omnipreſent, alike exiſtent, intelligent and obſervant, in every minuteſt portion of infinite ſpace: nevertheleſs it will be prudent to keep their ſcoffings to themſelves, leſt if they overthrow the popular notions, they may overthrow therewith all ſenſe of the divine Majeſty, all expedience of being circumſpect in their moſt private thoughts and actions, and that reverence in their devotions, which may beget an habitual diſpoſition of mind tending to regulate their behaviour in the world.

In theſe caſes it is not worth while to contend with an adverſary for the truth, or the tenets currently received; for ſuppoſing them errors, yet when an innocent error lies ſo cloſely connected in the minds of men with an important truth, as that both muſt ſtand or fall together, it is againſt the intereſt of truth to eradicate

cate it: for as in purſuit of pleaſure, ſo of truth, the greater income upon the whole is to be regarded. Therefore your men of pleaſure as they effect to call themſelves, very ill deſerve the title; for they graſp at every preſent indulgence greedily, but thereby bring on more grievous diſpleaſures afterwards: in like manner your indiſcreet ſticklers for truth prove in reality its greateſt enemies; they take vaſt pains to cure ſome little harmleſs miſtake, and by ſo doing often lead into other fatal miſtakes they were not aware of.

It is fixing the eye upon opinions ſingly, without reference to their connections and conſequences, that miſleads both the bigot and freethinker: the latter finds ſomething he thinks will not bear a ſcrutiny, as having no ground of reaſon to grow upon, ſo he ſets all his wits to work to pull it up by the roots, without minding what other uſeful plants are intermatted therewith, which of courſe will follow upon plucking this away: the other pitching upon ſome favourite tenet without ever examining whether it be directly ſerviceable of itſelf or only by its neceſſary relation to other ſerviceable perſuaſions, lays out his whole attention upon that, and purſues it to an extravagance incompatible with the very relation which alone made it recommendable. Whereas if we would give all our opinions, and all our duties their due ſhare of our regard, we might find them in

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time conſolidate into one regular ſyſtem, wherein there would be no breaks nor inconſiſtencies nor detached parcels, but they would model one another into ſhape and ſymmetry: and by diſcerning their ſeveral uſes and mutual dependencies, we ſhould underſtand them more perfectly, apply them more judiciouſly to our practice, and know better how to deal with other perſons according to their reſpective needs and diſpoſitions.

9. Hence it appears very material for him that would build a rational ſyſtem of faith, compact and ſolid in all its parts, to obſerve what perſuaſions are immediately ſerviceable in themſelves, and from thence to conſider, what others are neceſſary or expedient to protect and nouriſh the former.

Perſuaſions are ſerviceable, either when they tend to ſatisfy the mind with reſpect to our ſituation among things external, and to the rectitude and ſucceſs of our actions; or when they direct to meaſures which will yield good fruits of happineſs at ſome future time. The mind may be ſatisfied, and the will prompted to uſeful meaſures, by fallacious perſuaſions, which will operate as effectually as the beſt grounded until the fallacy is diſcovered: a man receiving a bag of counters, may be as well pleaſed therewith as if they were real gold, nor does his ſatisfaction abate until he finds upon trial they will not paſs current in the market;

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and if he have extraordinary talents, he may employ them indefatigably in public ſervices, while he can perſuade himſelf there is an unparalleled happineſs in having his fame continue many years after his deceaſe.

Perhaps it might be found upon examination, that much of our pleaſure and ſelf-confidence ariſes, and much of the buſineſs of life is carried on, by means of fallacious perſuaſions: or if they be juſt, they are ſo by chance, being not choſen upon diſcernment of their proper grounds, but taken up from cuſtom and faſhion, fallen into by habit, or generated by vanity, prejudice, and ſelf-love. This conſideration makes little for the credit of human nature, governed in great meaſure by a kind of inſtinct, like the brutes, led thereby to provide againſt wants they have no knowledge of: but it may ſerve to heighten our idea of Providence, which can execute the purpoſes of wiſdom by our follies, ignorance and errors, and draw us to work out a real good we think nothing of, by purſuing a fantaſtic good that is ſuch only in appearance and imagination.

Nevertheleſs though Providence knows how to bring good out of evil, we do not: therefore it is our duty to take ſuch meaſures of which there is a reaſonable proſpect to our own judgement, that they will bear valuable fruits. Fallacious perſuaſions may and do often ſatisfy the mind for the preſent, but as often diſturb it, and at beſt muſt

muſt ſome time or other, end in diſappointment: and if they prompt to uſeful performances, it is always with a mixture of inconvenience, which might have been avoided had the ſame been undertaken, upon good and ſolid motives. Wherefore it behoves us to form our opinions by the beſt exerciſes of our reaſon, upon ſuch materials as we find afforded us from our own experience or elſewhere, to examine which of them will yield the greateſt profit, and ſedulouſly to cultivate thoſe until they become habitual perſuaſions, riſing in their full ſtrength and colour whenever ſuggeſted to the thought, and to ſpread them as extenſively as we can among mankind.

10. To enumerate all the variety of perſuaſions which can ſooth for the preſent or urge to ſome profitable action, would be endleſs and impracticable; but they may be ranged under a few general heads, of which thoſe tending to immediate ſatisfaction of mind are three: when we have a good opinion of our condition, which generates Content; when we have a proſpect that things will happen well with us by and by, which is Hope; and when we confide in the rectitude of the conduct we are purſuing, which makes Self-approbation. Perſuaſions of the uſeful kind are of two ſorts: thoſe which give us full aſſurance that diſtant enjoyments will be preſent, and as delightful as thoſe in hand, or that every right action will be attended with

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ſome deſirable ſucceſs, which give life and vigour to the virtue of Prudence, and thoſe which make us regard the good of others as our own, whereon depends the virtue of Benevolence.

Health, vigorous deſires, and plenty of materials to gratify them, give men a good opinion of their condition, which is uſually heightened by compariſon: for they pleaſe themſelves more for poſſeſſing what others want, than for the intrinſic value of what they poſſeſs; and to make the claim of peculiar advantage the more general, they ſeverally undervalue and deſpiſe whatever does not ſuit with their own taſte, regarding the reſt of mankind, who follow different purſuits, as unhappy deluded creatures, but themſelves as the prime favourites of fortune. Nor were the Stoics wholly miſtaken when they placed happineſs in opinion, for much of our ſatisfaction ſprings from that ſource.

Perhaps the only advantage of riches, honours, power, bodily ſtrength, beauty, learning, quickneſs of parts, may lie in their being generally reputed advantages: for thoſe who want them, and have been habituated to live without them, have their other enjoyments as copiouſly as thoſe who abound in them, with this only difference, that the latter poſſeſs what they eſteem an advantage, and this opinion is all that can give it any pretence to be a real one. When the mind is ſatisfied with her ſituation,

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ſhe ſeldom forebodes miſchief for the future: but our views are generally very ſhort, and the future we concern ourſelves with extends not to ſuch a length as that we cannot eaſily flatter ourſelves that our preſent ſupplies of enjoyment will hold out. Having this ſcanty proſpect before us, we place rectitude of action in making proviſion for the gratifications lying within its compaſs: our vanity and ſelf-confidence confirms us in the propriety of our conduct, and we are angry at every one who ſhould preſume to cenſure or queſtion us upon it. Thus in this land of peace and plenty, we have moſt of us the three perſuaſions requiſite for preſent ſatisfaction: unleſs when ſome croſs accident or turbulent paſſion, or imaginary want comes athwart the way to diſturb our repoſe.

It may be thought trifling, that among the ſentiments worthy our endeavour to inculcate, I recommend the perſuaſion of diſtant enjoyments becoming preſent, and being as much enjoyments, when they come, as thoſe we have now in hand: for who ever doubts of this? or heſitates a moment to acknowledge, that to-morrow in ſome hours will be to-day, and that a diverſion we ſhall partake of to-morrow, may prove as entertaining as one we are this inſtant engaged in? I know very well we are all ſufficiently convinced, that the moſt diſtant futurity will one day become preſent, and when preſent,

whatever ſatisfaction or uneaſineſs it brings, will affect us as ſtrongly as thoſe we now feel: but it muſt be remembered that we are ſpeaking of perſuaſions, not of convictions, and the difference between the two is no where more remarkable, than upon the article of futurity. While we can hold up the lights of our underſtanding, we ſee clearly that remote good is alike valuable with the preſent: but it is the hardeſt thing in the world to fix an apprehenſion of this truth in lively colours upon our imagination.

The judgements of the mind correſpond in ſtrength and colour with that of the objects whereon they are paſſed: but the further objects are removed, they grow more faint and indiſtinct, and of courſe our opinions concerning them will be leſs vivid and clear. Both pleaſures and pains at a diſtance appear ſcarce worth our regarding, or giving ourſelves any trouble about them: let a man make trial, and he will find it impracticable with all his efforts, to raiſe an apprehenſion of the deſirableneſs of an enjoyment to come ſeven years hence, equal with one near at hand. For the preſent occupies our thoughts, and forcibly carries away the preference in our imagination from the future, againſt the cleareſt and ſureſt deciſions of our underſtanding. This imperfection of our nature deſerves our utmoſt application to rectify, by gradually inuring the mental eye to diſcern

diſcern objects diſtinctly at a diſtance: and it is the quickneſs of this moral ſenſe, or habitual full perſuaſion of certain good and evil, however remote, being alike valuable with the preſent, that conſtitutes the virtue of Prudence.

But the glaſs of paſſion will give a lively tint and magnitude to diſtant objects, when the eye of reaſon cannot: ambition, avarice, authority, example and cuſtom, ſet a value upon acquiſitions that take up a whole life in the making; and vanity perſuades us it is a deſirable thing to have our names well ſpoken of a hundred years after we are dead and gone. Theſe ſources then furniſh us in ſome meaſure with uſeful perſuaſions to carry on the buſineſs of life, and ſpur us up to as much induſtry in providing for the future as we do exert, ſerving as ſuccedaneums to ſupply the place of that prudence wherein we fall deficient. And the like ſprings derived from education, cuſtom, faſhion, and fear of cenſure, move us to the exerciſes of benevolence, inſtead of the mutual connection of intereſts between man and man, which is its moſt ſolid bottom; but of which we ſeldom have an intimate perſuaſion, though we ſometimes make profeſſion of it in our mouths, and perhaps ſincerely, as fancying that we have it, when in reality we have nothing more than the ſhame of being without it.

11. But theſe ſources of ſatisfactory and uſeful perſuaſions ſpoken of in the laſt ſection, do not flow upon all; nor are ſecure of being continued to any, as depending upon external and accidental cauſes: health, ſucceſs, the materials of gratification may be taken from us, or when not utterly loſt, are often withholden for a time; the ſolace found in compariſon will be frequently wreſted out of our hands, notwithſtanding our utmoſt partiality, upon ſeeing others poſſeſſed of advantages we cannot but acknowledge ſuperior to our own; diſappointment, danger, and diſtreſs, will deſtroy our ſanguine expectations of the future, and the miſchiefs we run ourſelves into by inconſiderateneſs, will diſcover a faultineſs in our conduct that with all our ſelf-conceit we cannot varniſh over. Paſſion, cuſtom, fear of cenſure, prove but ill ſuccedaneums to prudence and benevolence, doing their work imperfectly and injudiciouſly when ſet right, and often taking a wrong bias, urge us to act imprudently and ſelfiſhly.

Therefore theſe tranſient perſuaſions, ſpringing from ſhort views and narrow proſpects afford a very precarious benefit: to make them certainly and durably ſerviceable, they ought to be gathered from the moſt enlarged compaſs whereto the eye of underſtanding can ſtretch, ſo as to diſcern objects with an affecting clearneſs. Whoever is fully perſuaded that the lot

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of his exiſtence, ſo far as lies diſtinctly within his ken, contains a much greater proportion of enjoyment than uneaſineſs, muſt in general be content with his preſent condition, and augurate well for the future: and in ſeaſons of trouble, his hope, if lively, will hold content from flying away: caſting a gleam upon the darkneſs overwhelming him, from the many bright ſpots in proſpect before him. An entire confidence in the efficacy of reaſon to procure happineſs in oppoſition to the inferior faculties, will give it an influence upon the actions, and raiſe a conſtant ſelf-approbation in all that is done in purſuance of its dictates, even though they ſhould ſometimes lead into involuntary miſtakes. The habit of ſeeking ſatisfaction in the proſpects before him, and of confiding in the uſefulneſs of his underſtanding, will create a ſenſibility and deſire of diſtant good ſufficient to carry him through all prudential meaſures; and the opinion that whatever good he does to others redounds ſooner or later to his own advantage, will continually nouriſh in him a diſpoſition to univerſal benevolence.

But though ſuch perſuaſions may be received upon credit or catched by ſympathy from others, they muſt have been firſt embraced upon ſome intrinſic recommendation of their own; which muſt come from their agreeableneſs either to our inclination or our reaſon. There is a wonderful propenſity in mankind to believe what-

ever they wiſh to be true, and this may incline them to think well of their preſent ſituation, of the proſpects before them, and of the juſtifiableneſs of their actions, without other ground than becauſe the opinion is ſoothing to their thoughts. And it is ſo viſibly the intereſt of every man to have other perſons kindly diſpoſed towards him, that we all join in crying up benevolence until we perſuade ourſelves it is a real good to the party poſſeſſing it, without clearly diſcerning the way by which it operates to his benefit.

But thoſe perſuaſions, caſt upon us as it were mechanically by inclination or cuſtom, are liable to be wreſted from us by pain, vexation, or diſtemperature of the bodily humours throwing a melancholy gloom upon the mind, or by the company of perſons of contrary ſentiments: nor can be depended upon as ſecure and durable, unleſs fortified by other perſuaſions, built upon calm and ſolid reaſon, whereof inclination, prejudice and intereſt had no ſhare in the ſuperſtructure. Which perſuaſions muſt be drawn from Religion, becauſe nothing elſe can afford a compaſs of ground large enough for the foundation that will be wanted: and what are ſo drawn, I apprehend may properly be denominated Articles of Faith.

12. It cannot be denied that there are articles of natural as well as revealed Religion, nor that if they could be compleatly drawn out

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and heartily embraced, they would produce a happy and uſeful temper of mind, anſwering all the purpoſes we could wiſh for from them. For I ſuppoſe if Adam had continued ſtedfaſt in his innocence, he would have wanted no knowledge of whatever made for his good; nor yet would he have known any thing of thoſe promiſes, which were given for reſtoration of his lapſed race. But in the preſent darkened ſtate of his deſcendants, we have no certain rule whereby to ſettle and diſtinguiſh the neceſſary articles: every one is left to his own judgement, and thoſe who have exerciſed it moſt carefully, have varied greatly from one another in their determinations. In this uncertain ſituation of things, I may be excuſed in offering my ſentiments, taken, as may be expected, from the foregoing parts of this work: which I ſhall not attempt to impoſe as dictates of authority, but ſuggeſt only to the conſideration of each perſon who may think it worth while, either to receive or amend them, according as ſhall be found moſt reaſonable and convenient for his uſe.

The corner ſtone of Faith muſt be laid in the belief of one God, and the attributes of Omnipotence, Omniſcience, infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Equity: upon this bottom well grounded will ſtand firmly the dominion of Providence, by the appointment or permiſſion whereof all events come to paſs without exception

tion throughout the univerſe, ordering all things for the beſt; but then by this beſt muſt be underſtood, not what appears ſo to our deſires or judgement, but what is beſt in the eye of unerring Wiſdom for the creation in general. But ſince many diſpenſations of Providence tend to the detriment of human life, we can have no intereſt in the good fruits of them, if our exiſtence terminates with our life: therefore the next point to be inculcated, is the unperiſhableneſs of our nature; that we ſhall for ever retain the capacity of enjoyment and ſuffering, and that our ſenſibility will be at leaſt as great when ſeparated from the body, as in it.

Having fixed this article upon our minds, it will be neceſſary to impreſs the perſuaſion of diſtant enjoyments whereof we have an aſſured expectation, being as valuable as thoſe near at hand: and upon this article there needs no argument to convince us, that a thouſand years hence will in due time be preſent, as ſurely as the next hour; the difficulty lies in turning this conviction into a ſtrong and lively apprehenſion, equally vivid with that worked by the evidence of the ſenſes; without which all our other perſuaſions will avail little, either to ſatisfy the mind, or to carry us on in the proſecution of our moſt important intereſts. If we could compleatly attain ſuch quick ſenſibility of the future, we ſhould never want a counterpoize to balance

balance the weight of any preſent evil that might befal us: for we ſhould always have an exhilerating proſpect in view, being aſſured, from the divine dominion and goodneſs, that there muſt be abundantly more good than evil in nature; and ſince goodneſs cannot terminate its views upon evil, therefore the very evils we lie under muſt be ſent for ſome greater good to redound therefrom to the creation. But the divine Equity, inferring an equality of enjoyment and burden among the creatures, enſures to us our ſhare of the profit ariſing from every trouble, and of all the good befalling every where.

It is this connects the Univerſe into one ſociety of coparceners; brings the intereſt of others home to ourſelves; overthrows all pretence to privilege and pre-eminence, renders it indifferent to whoſe profit we apply our endeavours, whether to our own or our fellow-creatures, provided we turn them where they may yield the greateſt advantage; and makes us deſirous and delighted to ſee happineſs wherever it can be found, as giving us a better opinion of the lot of exiſtence whereof we partake. But though the lot of exiſtence be equal upon the whole balance of ſome immenſe period, too long for us to meaſure by the line of our comprehenſion, yet the ſeveral ſtages of it are unequal: this we know by undoubted experience to be the caſe of human life, nor does there

want

want reaſon to expect much greater inequalities, and of far longer duration, in the ſtage of being we have next to paſs through; wherein it appears, upon contemplation of the divine Juſtice, that our condition will depend upon our behaviour here, this life being preparatory to the next.

The conſideration that all creatures and all forms of being lie under the dominion of one Governor, may convince us, that the ſeveral laws reſpecting them were formed upon one all-comprehenſive plan: therefore the municipal laws in each diſtrict were calculated for the good of the whole, and by promoting the advantage of our fellow travellers in the ſtage wherein we are placed, we ſhall take the ſureſt method of procuring advantage to every other ſtage we have yet to paſs through. So that though the happineſs of the next life be the principal and ultimate aim of our purſuit, yet the general good of mankind in this world, and of ourſelves as members of the ſpecies, is our immediate aim and proper direction to attain the other: this then we ought conſtantly to purſue by ſuch rules of Religion, morality and prudence, contributing thereto, as we find eſtabliſhed upon the beſt foundations.

Our underſtanding being the faculty that God has given us for the guidance of our conduct, we may reſt ſatisfied that he has proportioned his gift to the purpoſes he intended

ſhould

ſhould be ſerved by it: therefore we may confide in the directions of this guide, being aſſured that, while we follow them, we purſue our own trueſt advantage. For though our guide will ſometimes lead us into errors and inconveniencies, yet ſooner or later we ſhall find it was better upon the whole that we have taken his admonitions, than if we had acted contrary to them: and this perſuaſion will give us a ſerenity and ſelf-approbation in the rectitude of our meaſures, whether ſucceſsful or not, whenever conſcious of having taken them upon the beſt of our honeſt judgement, in preference to the ſolicitations of appetite, or paſſion, or intereſt, or other motive whatſoever. If our abilities to do ſervice be ſmall, or our opportunities ſcarce, if we find our reaſon at any time dark and uncertain, or that we cannot riſe to thoſe heights of virtue we wiſh and endeavour; this need not diſturb us: for God diſtributes his gifts to every man in wiſdom and goodneſs, and though underſtanding and virtue be among the choiceſt of his gifts, wherefore we ought to improve them to the utmoſt, yet ſtill they are gifts; which ſhould make us ſatisfied with the portion allotted us, without repining at what is denied: for we have always ſome choice in our actions, and ſtrength to perform ſomething of what we diſcern; if we can do nothing elſe, we may ſolace ourſelves with the reflection of having

having made ſome uſe of the glimpſes of light and pittance of vigor afforded us, which will encourage us to make a further uſe of them, as often as occaſion ſhall offer.

13. Theſe articles of faith ſtrongly riveted in the mind, ſo as to become habitual prevailing perſuaſions, muſt I conceive, nouriſh and ſtrengthen thoſe ſatisfactory and uſeful ſentiments ſpoken of in § 11, whereon depend content, hope, ſelf-approbation, prudence and benevolence; which in a cloſe-thinking perſon, can hardly ſtand ſecure and ſtable without them. For to ſuch a one, the bare ſanction of authority or general reception will not always ſuffice; the notion of opinions and practices good in themſelves without reference to uſe, will often prove a hollow foundation, nor can ſuch reference be carried along upon ſolid ground without juſt and rational ideas of the ſupreme Being; from whoſe character alone we can gather any thing with aſſurance concerning things unſeen, or the relation our preſent ſtate and tranſactions bear thereto. Therefore they appear to me fundamentals of natural Religion: but as the pious and judicious Chillingworth has obſerved, fundamentals are not univerſal; the ſame tenets being ſuch to one man which are not ſo to another, according to their reſpective apprehenſion of things, and model of their underſtanding.

Therefore

Therefore if any man finds another theory of univerſal Nature, its laws, and relations, different in any particulars from that above ſketched out, more ſatisfactory to his reaſon, more effectually to enſure him a ſteady peace of mind in all ſituations, to carry him through any difficulty, danger or ſelf-denial, in purſuit of a greater remote good, and enable him to forego any preſent pleaſure or private advantage for the certain profit of the public; let him regard it in the liſt of fundamentals to him: only let him not reſt in the conviction of his underſtanding, but by frequent meditation and other methods he ſhall judge expedient, work it into an habitual ſentiment that may riſe ſpontaneouſly upon occaſion, and make his theory practical, ſo as to have an influence upon his ordinary thoughts and motives.

14. But there is no good thing which has not its imperfections and its oppoſite evils, which are as pernicious as the good is ſalutary, and therefore ought induſtriouſly to be guarded againſt. I have laid down that a perſuaſion, to be faith, muſt be right, and it muſt be ſtrong: it is not right when it leads to ſentiments contrary to thoſe before ſpecified as ſatisfactory and uſeful, and then may be called a hereſy or anti-fundamental; and I think it is the trueſt teſt of hereſy to examine whether it muſt naturally tend to make us diſſatisfied with ourſelves,

ſelves, careleſs of our real intereſts, and regardleſs of one another. If we could ſettle the liſt of fundamentals, whatever opinion oppoſite thereto catches ſtrong hold on the judgement, ſo as to be regarded as a certain truth, muſt be counted heretical: but though it may be difficult to aſcertain every thing preciſely that is ſo, yet in ſome particulars one can hardly be miſtaken.

When we entertain narrow notions of Nature or of the Deity, aſcribing an original power to Chance and Neceſſity, or imagining God partial, vindictive, arbitrary, having an intereſt to ſerve upon us for the advancement of his glory, ſtraitened in his good purpoſes by an uncontroulable nature of things, or ſcattering his bleſſings ſparingly to a few only out of innumerable multitudes: this will unavoidably fill us with fears and ſuſpicions of miſchief to come, doubts and diſtruſts concerning the rectitude of our meaſures.

The doctrine we are too commonly bred up in and find generally eſtabliſhed among mankind, that happineſs lies in the indulgence of preſent deſires, confines our views to the ground juſt before us, and effectually deſtroys that faith in the deſirableneſs of remote advantages, which is the vital blood and ſinews of prudence. You ſhall hear people value themſelves upon their voluptuouſneſs, their idleneſs, their

their exquiſite taſte of pleaſures, their averſion to labour and ſelf-denial of every kind; and what was originally an appetite ſhared in common with the brutes, becomes a deliberate choice of the judgement, a ſettled ſcheme of conduct, a ruling principle of action.

Nor does vanity fail of producing many heretical ſentiments: children are brought up from their infancy in a high conceit of themſelves, their condition and endowments; they deſpiſe every thing around them as trivial, ſordid, and wretched; they think merit and the title to happineſs peculiarly their own. This muſt give them an unfavourable idea of nature, wherein they can ſee ſo very little worth the having: if things happen croſs with them, they murmur againſt Providence, of whoſe goodneſs they can form no conception unleſs in an uninterrupted partiality to themſelves; and begin to fear the world is not adminiſtered juſtly, becauſe things unpleaſing are permitted to fall upon ſuch precious creatures. They are incapable of a ſentiment of benevolence, as deeming none worthy regard except their own ſweet perſons, and ſome few favourites miniſtring to their pleaſures, or reſembling themſelves. Their habit of drawing every thing to their own center makes them look upon all labour as loſt that is laid out in the ſervice of another, as hearty good-will cannot well ſubſiſt with contempt, they can bear none

none to mankind in general, whom they utterly deſpiſe, as having nothing ſuitable to their own taſte and cuſtoms: the dirty peaſant is below their notice, becauſe he has not the dreſs and breeding of a gentleman; the Chineſe and Tartar is not worth a thought of what becomes of them, becauſe they know none of the Engliſh modes; the Negro may be treated like a beaſt, becauſe he is black and blubber-lipped; and the beaſts may be abuſed, mangled and tortured, for convenience, pleaſure, or fancy, with as little ſcruple as we ſaw the trees into boards, becauſe they cannot expoſtulate with us, nor retaliate.

15. The imperfection of faith is not owing to its erroneouſneſs, but its faintneſs: many people have their underſtandings ſet rightly enough, and aſſent to the moſt important truths ſincerely without heſitation: but their aſſent is like the ſight of objects through a miſt, and leaves a ſecret ſuſpicion and miſtruſt that perhaps they may not be true, though without any apparent reaſon to doubt of their truth. This as we have obſerved before, is only a dead or nominal, not a real or lively faith: and is ſo far from removing mountains, that it cannot remove a mole-hill, nor overcome the ſlighteſt obſtacle of apperite, terror or indolence.

Several cauſes contribute to prevent perſuaſions from growing to their full ſtrength: our haſti-

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neſs to take them up on truſt in veneration of authority or compliance with cuſtom, before we have well digeſted them, or examined the weight of the authority or ſources of the cuſtom, or endeavoured to ſupport them by foundations from our own fund. The fallibility of human reaſon, which makes us loath to hazard any thing upon its cleareſt deciſions, unleſs confirmed by actual experience. The neceſſary attendance to the common buſineſs of life, and expedience of taking care firſt of the concerns neareſt at hand, which perpetually draw off our thoughts from remote objects and extenſive ſcenes.

Beſides this, our articles ſometimes ſeem to claſh: the due regard to our own intereſts obliges us to croſs, to diſappoint, to contend with other perſons, even to puniſh and put them to hard ſervice, and to forbear ſome things tending to the public weal: wherein Prudence appears to ſtand at variance with Benevolence. The abſolute dominion of Providence, ordering all things for the beſt, may ſeem to ſuperſede the uſe of our own deliberation and induſtry; the ultimate equality of all may give us an apprehenſion that our ſucceſs upon the whole will be the ſame whether we behave well or ill: as on the other hand, the conſtant experience in this world, and rational expectations of the next, that the conditions of men depend upon their own management, may tend in our judgement to

overthrow the doctrines of Providence and Equality.

While our opinions thus interfere they muſt neceſſarily weaken and diſcredit one another, keep us wavering between two, uncertain whether of them to prefer; in which caſe ſome appetite or ſecret inclination generally ſteps in to caſt the balance, and the ſuſpicion of this makes us perpetually miſtruſtful of our conduct. Wherefore to obviate ſuch inconveniencies, it will be expedient frequently to compare our ſentiments together, to work them into one regular body, having no diſcordance among the parts, but rather mutually depending upon each other. For which purpoſe it may be helpful to recollect what has been offered reſpectively upon thoſe ſeemingly claſhing tenets in the former parts of this work; wherein endeavours have been uſed to reconcile them in perfect harmony together, to ſhew that they tend jointly to one end, the advancement of happineſs, and ſtand upon one bottom, experience of human and external nature, together with the obſervations and reaſonings clearly flowing therefrom.

16. But theſe reaſonings proceed by ſteps from one diſcovery to another, and the juſtneſs of each ſubſequent deduction depends upon that of the preceding: hence it happens that there are always ſome intermediate ſpeculative opinions, which though yielding no direct profit themſelves, yet ſerve to ſupport and corrobo-

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rate our fundamentals. For upon contemplation of them, our articles of faith will become convictions of reaſon; but conviction is the beſt and ſureſt baſis whereon to erect perſuaſion, and by being frequently run over in the thoughts, will eſtabliſh it moſt ſtrongly. Such of theſe ſpeculative opinions then as are the premiſes neceſſary to work conviction of an article, we may ſtile ſecondary or relative fundamentals, as having a near connection with the eſſential; and deſerve to be well examined firſt, and then thoroughly fixed in the mind, that they may occur readily upon occaſion without doubt or diſtruſt of their truth.

I have been careful all along in the courſe of theſe enquiries, to ſeek for what might redound to good profit, and how much ſoever I may be thought to have dealt in curious ſpeculations, am not conſcious of having purſued any that appeared meer empty curioſities, or improper for remote foundations whereon to build uſeful and ſalutary doctrines. Among theſe ſecondary fundamentals I reckon the individuality of the human mind or perſon, the faculties of perception and volition being primary properties of the individual, the non-entity of chance, the certainty of free actions, the dependence of freewill upon motives and thoſe upon antecedent cauſes, the right exerciſe of our freedom being the channel whereby good is conveyed to us, the doctrine of univerſal Providence, the

derivation of virtue from the proviſions of Heaven through the channel of human volition, the Attribute of Equity, the foundation of Juſtice upon expedience, the ſpiritual body ſurviving the carnal and rendring us capable of preparation for the next life, becauſe there can be no preparation nor alteration in an individual, the conformity of municipal laws reſpecting mankind, with the univerſal reſpecting created Beings in general, whereby the former become our direction how to conduct ourſelves agreeably to the latter.

Theſe points appear to me clearly deducible from the knowledge we may gain by experience, and are the pillars without which I could not ſupport the more important articles before ſpecified, nor give them a ſolid conſiſtence in my underſtanding: therefore muſt look upon them as deſerving to be thoroughly conſidered and firmly fixed in mind among the neceſſary Credenda of philoſophic Faith. But ſince the underſtandings of men are variouſly conſtituted, whoever can ſatisfy himſelf in his fundamentals upon other principles, may regard thoſe I have laid down as meer ſpeculations, for I did not propoſe them for any intrinſic value they might be ſuppoſed to contain, but only for the ſalutary perſuaſions following from them: therefore they become fundamentals or not, according to the conſequences they will naturally produce in the minds of particular perſons. For uſe and happineſs

pineſs are the ſole points ultimately to be conſidered, and whatever theory tends moſt effectually to ſecure a conſtant ſerenity of mind and ſteady induſtry in the proſecution of our own intereſt and the good of others is the moſt valuable, and moſt carefully to be cultivated.

Nevertheleſs there is this defect in all philoſophic Credenda, that they cannot obtain a general reception even among the thoughtful, but each man has his own ſet peculiar to himſelf; which muſt greatly retard and weaken their effect. For Imagination, which we have ſhewn to be the ſeat of faith, the cleareſt convictions of underſtanding not deſerving that name until they have made a firm lodgement there, is a ſenſitive faculty: it will not follow the ſureſt guidance of reaſon without aſſiſtance of ſome mechanical operation. Wherefore twenty men may eaſier perſuade one another into any thing by the mechanical workings of ſympathy, that is by continually chiming together in the ſame notion, than one man can eſtabliſh it firmly in himſelf by the force of his underſtanding, among nineteen diſſentients.

Since then imagination ſo hardly follows underſtanding when moſt vigorous, what can we expect it to do in the bulk of mankind, who want leiſure and opportunity for improving their faculties to full maturity? They muſt neceſſarily take up their opinions upon truſt, but not knowing whom to truſt, would have no opi-

nions at all, nor other guidance than their own accidental fancies. Were men of thought unanimous in one ſcheme of natural Religion, they might eaſily draw the reſt of the world after them; and were that ſcheme a good one, it might perhaps anſwer all the purpoſes wanted from it: but this is not likely to happen in our days, nor the days of our children, or children's children. Why then ſhould we not rather chooſe to effect the ſame purpoſes by the opinions publickly eſtabliſhed among us, which are ſo eaſily applicable thereto, and which divine Providence appears to have directed by having given them ſo general admiſſion? only taking care to prevent their being turned by perverſe miſrepreſentations, as too frequently has been done, to oppoſite purpoſes.

17. Men in general as I obſerved juſt now, take up their opinions upon truſt, either from the authority of perſons they revere, or example of perſons among whom they continually converſe; and are more confident in the certainty of what they take this way than any philoſopher in the diſcoveries of his ſcience: yet they will be more ſecure to continue firm and unſhaken, if enabled to give a reaſon for the faith that is in them. But the reaſons to work effectually upon them muſt be ſuch, as will tally with the model of their underſtanding, to which the nice inveſtigations of nature can ſcarce be rendered intelligible, nor the fine lines of connection

nection running among them, diſcernable: they can much eaſier apprehend the evidences of facts, and be made ſenſible of the concluſions reſulting therefrom.

This belief of miracles, ſigns, and wonders having been actually worked by almighty Power, of remote events having been foretold, immediate revelations vouchſafed to particular perſons, of God having united himſelf to one man ſo as that all the acts and words of that man were the acts and words of God, and this done in tranſcendent mercy for reſtoring the human race from a ſtate of miſery to a ſtate of happineſs, his having declared life and immortality open to all, and riſen from the dead as an earneſt of our reſurrection, the promiſe of divine aſſiſtance to co-operate with our endeavours, the perſuaſion of our minds ſometimes actually feeling the effect of ſuch aſſiſtance, the ſtrong injunctions to reſiſt all inordinate paſſion and appetite, and allurement of preſent pleaſure, to bear a univerſal good will to our fellow creatures, to expect ample reward for every conqueſt over ourſelves, and every good office performed to one another, to do all things for the glory of God, and the placing that glory in a lively ſenſe of his Omnipotence, his never ſleeping Providence, his mercy, his loving kindneſs, his righteouſneſs and holineſs, ordering all his diſpenſations for our good, ſo that no evil ſhall befal us but he will with the temptation alſo make a way to

eſcape, that we may be able to bear it: the firm belief of theſe points muſt, in the dulleſt apprehenſions, beget a perſuaſion inſtigating to the practice of prudence and benevolence, and render ſuch practice a perpetual ſource of content, and hope, and ſelf-ſatisfaction.

The authority of the Scriptures, dictated by the unerring wiſdom of God, ſhorten the way to uſeful knowledge within a length that the weakeſt faculties can hold out; and prove a readier plainer guide in matters of doctrine or duty, than the beſt enlightened human reaſon purſuing its courſe by long intricate deductions of one conſequence from another: So that whereas it was a common ſaying among the philoſophers, that truth lies hidden at the bottom of the well; the firmly-rooted Chriſtian may ſay, that all neceſſary truths are raiſed up to the ſurface by the written word, where they ſtand apparent in ſuch legible characters as that he who runs may read.

18. It does not fall within my province to examine the evidences whereon the authority of Scripture is founded, nor truth of the facts, and peculiar doctrines recorded there; this is the proper buſineſs of divines, to whom I ſhall leave it: I mean no more than to attempt a rational explanation of what has been there inculcated concerning the neceſſity and efficacy of Faith, by help of the principles already maintained in this Chapter; agreeably to my general purpoſe

purpoſe of working a reconcilement between Reaſon and Revelation in thoſe points wherein they have been ſet at wideſt variance by unbelievers. In order whereto it will be expedient to touch upon that controverſy formerly much agitated among Chriſtians relating to the preference between Faith and Works, whether of the two operates immediately to our benefit, or is recommendable only for the ſake of the other. Which nevertheleſs I take to be a needleſs unprofitable queſtion: for ſince faith and works muſt conſtantly go together, it is not at all material which of them is the valuable poſſeſſion, becauſe whoever has them both, may be ſure of having the right; and whoever falls deficient in one, deceives himſelf if he thinks he has the other.

Yet how unavailing ſoever the determination of this point may be for common uſe in the conduct of life, I apprehend it may throw ſome light upon the ſubject of our preſent enquiry. If then by Benefit be meant ſuch as we can receive upon earth, I muſt clearly give the preference to works: for the benefit redounding to me from another, depends upon the greatneſs of the ſervices he does me, not at all upon his intention, or perſuaſion of its being a duty; and his intention is no otherwiſe valuable to me than as it prompts him to do the ſervices, which provided they be effectually done, it is all one whether

ther they were done out of good-will, or vanity, or ſelf-intereſt, or through miſtake.

It is commonly ſaid that a man had better have a knave for his ſteward than a fool, becauſe the one will only cheat you himſelf, but the other will ſuffer every body elſe to cheat you. And the caſe is the ſame with reſpect to a man's management of his own intereſts in the world, which he will purſue more ſucceſsfully by having large abilities, than a right diſpoſition of mind.

But with reſpect to our intereſts in futurity, which are incomparably more valuable, the caſe is widely different: for though it be ſaid our works follow us, it is the remembrance of them only that follows, to be an evidence of the diſpoſition and tenour of mind producing them; for the works themſelves can yield nothing advantageous to our condition then, nor furniſh materials we ſhall be capable of enjoying. Whether or no I can improve my own or my neighbour's health, or fortune, or reputation, or learning, or pleaſures, it will be all one to both a hundred years hence; any farther than as the making ſuch improvements are exerciſes of my own virtues, or give him larger opportunities for the exerciſes of his. Therefore in eſtimating the goodneſs of actions, the motive and temper of mind wherewith they were performed, where it can be certainly known, is the ſole thing to be conſidered: no matter whether the good done

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be great or ſmall, if the benevolence were hearty and ſtrong, the deed is of equal value to the performer.

We know, the widow who caſt in her two mites, which make a farthing, to charitable uſes, was declared to have given more than the rich men who threw in their talents, that is, more productive of good effects in the next world, though certainly leſs beneficial to the poor receiving it in this; and that greater profit aroſe wholly from her greater zeal, which prompted her to part with all that ſhe had beyond that of the rich men who gave of their abundance: and had the widow, as ſhe was going along to the treaſury, found a purſe of gold, though ſhe might have done more good therewith than ſhe could with her farthing, ſhe would not have been the better woman, nor have found any thing in the purſe to add a grain to the piety and charity ſhe brought with her from home.

The only true eſtate for ever we can purchaſe by our care and diligence, lies in the ſentiments of the heart, for the virtues as well as all other deſires, depend upon our perſuaſions; we deſire things according to the ideas of them in our imagination; not indeed always according to the conviction of our reaſon, for this does not always beget an apprehenſion in the internal ſenſe equal to itſelf, but whatever we ſtrongly apprehend will be good and ſatisfactory in the poſſeſ-

poſſeſſion, never fails to excite our deſire: ſo that ſuch as our habitual perſuaſions are, ſuch will be our prevailing deſires, and ſuch our ordinary tenour of conduct. Hence it appears that Faith, taken in its utmoſt extent, including every ſalutary perſuaſion, is the only poſſeſſion primarily valuable; and good works depending in great meaſure upon opportunities and external cauſes, can no otherwiſe be placed to the credit of our account than as they manifeſt it, and as the practice of them contributes moſt of any thing to invigorate and encreaſe it.

19. If it be aſked in what manner faith will operate to our future benefit, the pious Chriſtian has a ready anſwer, that it is by engaging the bountiful favour of God towards us: for having promiſed that whoever believeth ſhall be ſaved, he will reward all ſuch as have obeyed his voice and truſted in his word, giving them eternal life and unſpeakable happineſs by his own immediate act and almighty Power. But ſince this anſwer may not ſatisfy ſome, who fancy that God does nothing unleſs by the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes, and by certain ſtated laws of nature, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew a probability, that he has actually made ſuch proviſion of cauſes in the conſtitution of the human frame, as that our perſuaſions here naturally effect our condition hereafter.

It is generally holden upon the beſt authorities, as well of reaſon as religion, and has been con-

confirmed by ſeveral obſervations in former Chapters, that this life is a preparation for the next: now one cannot well imagine a preparation made, unleſs by ſome alteration or better diſpoſition of parts, but what change or new diſpoſition of parts can take place in an individual which has no parts? From whence it ſeems neceſſarily to follow, that the human ſoul, when departed from the body remains ſtill a compound, conſiſting of an individual ſpirit vitally united to ſome material ſyſtem, ſerving it for organs of perception and inſtruments of action, as our limbs and bodily ſenſes ſerve us upon earth: and in this ſyſtem the preparation is made, by diſpoſing it for better performing the functions that will be wanted from it hereafter.

For being, while encloſed in the body, the inner chamber we inhabit, and medium whereby we receive all our ſenſations from external objects, or reflections occurring from our imagination, and beginning the motions propagated onward to our limbs, or bringing up ideas before us in voluntary reflection, it muſt be affected by whatever paſſes with us here. Tranſient ſenſations and motions may be ſuppoſed to affect it for the moment only of their action; but habitual perſuaſions, caſting up their ideas conſtantly in the ſame train, are likely to work a durable effect, diſpoſing the fibres, ſhaping the limbs, and determining the powers of the ſpiritual body: ſo that it will go out differently

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formed and capacitated according to the mould wherein it has lain and according to the impreſſions received from the thoughts and words and deeds flowing from good, or evil habits. And this way it may be eaſily underſtood, how we may lay up treaſures in heaven by means of a ſtrong and lively faith, exemplified in the ſteady practice of all good works we have ability and opportunity to perform.

20. For though we have ſeen that good works are of none avail in themſelves to our future benefit, yet are they the proper teſt whereby to try the genuineneſs of our faith: for all perſuaſions are not faith, ſome of them are merely ſpeculative, and indifferent, others are pernicious and deſtructive of our future intereſts. But we can make no anatomical or phyſical diſcoveries of the ſpiritual body, to inſtruct us how it lies encloſed in the corporeal machine, with what nerves it connects, what trains of thought or action of the animal ſpirits will contribute to give it health and vigour, or to enfeeble and diſorder it: nor can we come at any ſerviceable knowledge concerning it, unleſs from the ſame ground whereon we may judge of all other things unknown and unſeen; I mean, the idea of that Power who is the maker and diſpoſer of things viſible and inviſible, and has diſpoſed them both upon one plan, ſo as to make the former our direction for the meaſures relative to the latter.

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From hence we may rationally conclude, that whatever perſuaſions beſt promote the happineſs of human life, introducing a conſtant ſerenity of mind and ſteady induſtry in the proſecution of our own and each others intereſts, will prove the moſt ſalutary and nouriſhing to the ſpiritual body, or little fœtus forming and faſhioning within us. Therefore juſt and lively ſentiments of God, of his Attributes, his Providence, and adminiſtration of both worlds, adapting the laws of each to the uſes of the other, may be deemed the fundamental of natural Religion, and the true ſaving Faith.

If we have recourſe to the Scriptures, we ſhall find there the faith in Chriſt declared to be a fundamental without which no man can be ſaved; and certainly what God has declared neceſſary, muſt be acknowledged ſo without diſpute; for even ſuppoſing faith to operate by natural means, he beſt knows the conſtitution of the ſpiritual body, and what will prove advantageous to it: therefore none who believes the Scriptures to be the word of God, can doubt of this being a fundamental. But we have ſeen towards the cloſe of our Chapter upon the Trinity, that fundamentals are of two ſorts; thoſe eſſentially, ſuch as operating directly to our benefit, and thoſe derivatively fundamentals, becauſe neceſſary to ſupport the former, and deriving their value from the

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others which they ſupport: the queſtion then is, whether faith in Chriſt and his peculiar doctrines, be a fundamental of the firſt, or of the ſecond ſort.

If we obſerve the general tenor of the Scriptures without laying too much ſtreſs upon ſingle detached texts, we ſhall find them recommend a ſober, righteous, and godly life, doing the Will of God, and repoſing a full truſt in the wiſdom and goodneſs of his diſpenſations, otherwiſe called, Coming to the Father, as requiſites neceſſary to Salvation. But we can come to the Father, during our continuance upon earth, none otherwiſe than by entertaining juſt and worthy ſentiments of him, which if ſtrong and habitually inculcated upon our minds, cannot fail of producing a good life, inclining us ſtedfaſtly to do his Will, and inſpiring a confidence in his protection and government. Thus we ſee that coming to the Father ſtands as a fundamental upon the authority both of reaſon and Scripture, nor have we ground in either to imagine, that it is not the ſole eſſentially fundamental compleatly operating to ſalvation: for I do not recollect it is any where expreſſed in the Scriptures, that any man who cometh to the Father, by what way ſoever he arrives, ſhall be rejected by him.

But they declare, that faith in Chriſt is the only way by which we can arrive thither: therefore coming to the Son becomes a neceſſary

ceſſary fundamental, becauſe it is the ſole paſſage leading into that which was originally ſo.

21. There are people who conceit themſelves, that they can come to the Father without paſſing through the Son: if they can, I ſhall not ſcruple to pronounce them in a ſtate of ſalvation; but whether they can or no belongs not to us to determine, for who art thou that judgeſt another's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. Our Chriſtian charity, which we are told is not puffed up, ſeeketh not her own, but believeth all things, hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil, ſhould incline us to judge favourably of our fellow ſervants. And that we may not want foundation ſo to do, let us remember, that acceſs to the Father is obtained by gradual approaches, ſome of which muſt be previous even to the paſſage through the Son: for he has told himſelf, that no man can come to the Son except the Father draw him. And this matter ſtands exemplified in Cornelius the centurion, who was accepted of God while yet an unbeliever; and this diſtant approach he had made under guidance of his natural lights, procuring him an opening into the only way leading to ſalvation. Nor have we room to doubt that in all ages, there have been and ſtill are many Cornelii in the world, alike accepted of God, who therefore will not withhold from them the means neceſ-

ſary for their final happineſs: but ſince he has not vouchſafed them directions by an Angel, nor provided a Peter at hand to inſtruct them in his goſpel, we may depend upon his having contrived other methods in his laws of nature and courſes of Providence, which ſhall prove as effectual towards putting them into the right way of life and immortality.

I ſhall not have occaſion to repeat what has been urged in the 12th, 13th, and 14th Sections of the laſt Chapter; for if God be good and would not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould attain everlaſting life, and if Chriſt be the only ſure and certain way thereto, both which we muſt believe upon the authority of the goſpel, there needs little argumentation to prove, that this will ſooner or later be opened to every man: and ſince there is a degree of approach towards the Father preparatory to the paſſage through the Son, we ought to regard thoſe to whom the goſpel has never been preached, or who have been unavoidably drawn away by bad education or ill company from liſtening to it, or to whom the doctrines contained there have been injudiciouſly repreſented, ſo as to make them repugnant to calm and unprejudiced reaſon, all theſe we ought to regard as being in the preparatory ſtate of acceptance before God, provided we find they have ſincerely endeavoured to approach as near towards him, as the natural lights afforded them would

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ſerve to direct. And though we muſt not believe them actually ſaved, nor yet upon the road to ſalvation, we may, conſiſtently with our Chriſtian principles, eſteem them travellers, equipt with all neceſſary accoutrements for the journey, and ready to ſet out upon the right road whenever an opening ſuitable to their underſtanding ſhall be granted.

In the mean while it will become us to conſider them as perſons intereſted in the ſame hopes with ourſelves, though perhaps at a remoter diſtance, who will one day become our fellow travellers, members of the ſame ſpiritual body; and to forward them in their approaches to the Father, by all kind of good offices and aſſiſtance in our power to give, or their capacity to receive; joining with them in ſuch exerciſes of human reaſon as will lead into the pureſt ſentiments of natural Religion: for this is an eſſential part of the revealed, and this way we may be helpful to one another without retarding our progreſs in any other knowledge it may be expedient for us to attain.

22. But our main concern lies with the rule of our own conduct, not with paſſing curious judgements upon that of other people: therefore we to whom the truths and doctrines of the goſpel have been propounded in a manner ſatisfactory to our underſtanding, and who ſtand convinced upon obſervation of human nature,

that mankind cannot be brought into right ſentiments of the Father by philoſophical ſpeculations, ought diligently to purſue the road whereinto we have been granted entrance: for whatever ways there may be for other perſons, this is our only way whereby we can attain ſalvation. Nevertheleſs we are to remember, this is only the way, not the place of our deſtination; and he who ſticks in the way might as well never have entered upon it.

For faith in the Father would ſuffice without faith in the Son, were there a poſſibility of attaining it without: had we not been lapſed creatures, we ſhould have wanted no redemption, and conſequently could have known of none to believe in; and ſince we have promiſe of the Comforter who will teach us all things, it is poſſible he may one day ſo rectify and ſtrengthen the underſtandings of mankind, as that the light of their reaſon alone may lead them into juſt ſentiments of God, without the peculiar doctrines and inſtructions of the goſpel. But this time, if it ever ſhall come upon earth, is yet far remote: therefore it behoves us carefully to uſe the means put into our hands for enlightning the darkneſs and aſſiſting the weakneſs of our faculties.

On the other hand, faith in Chriſt, without coming to the Father, is of none avail to any: the devils believe and tremble, but their faith proves a torment to them, becauſe they have not

not a right faith in God, as appears manifeſt from their inveterate malice and indefatigable oppoſition againſt the proviſions of his government: and Chriſt himſelf declares, that if any have ſo ſtrong faith in him as to propheſy, to caſt out devils, to do many mighty works in his name, yet if they be workers of iniquity, which indicates their want of a ſound faith in God, he will thruſt them from him as aliens and reprobates. From hence we may learn not to place our dependence upon orthodoxy, or zeal in defending it, or praying, pſalm-ſinging, reading, meditating, or the punctual performance of religious inſtitutions and ceremonies; all which are of no value otherwiſe than as means to ſtrengthen in us proper ſentiments of God and his Providence, and theſe ſentiments, if attained, will infallibly ſhow themſelves in our practice: therefore in all our religious duties we ought to regard the influence they will have upon our temper of mind and our practice, and may judge of their propriety by the effect we find them take thereupon; for ye ſhall know men by their works.

Nevertheleſs it is not works, but faith, that operates to ſalvation; therefore no man need diſturb himſelf that he cannot riſe to thoſe heights of virtue and clearneſs of underſtanding, or do ſo much good, as he wiſhes; for the diſpoſition and perſuaſions of the mind are as well evidenced in ſmall abilities as in great. A right

faith is compatible with the common buſineſs and tranſactions of life: therefore it is a ſpurious piety, that makes men deſirous to lay out their whole time in exerciſes of devotion. Whoever poſſeſſes juſt notions of God muſt believe he orders all things in perfect wiſdom: ſince then he in his Providence has placed us in a ſituation that renders an attention neceſſary to our bodily wants, our worldly concerns, the conveniencies and even pleaſures of our fellow creatures, we may ſhow our obedience in performing theſe little offices with innocence and propriety according to the occaſion, as well as the higher duties and acts of Religion. For we are ſervants whoſe buſineſs it is to fulfil the taſk before us; we muſt not expect to be always employed in attendance upon our Maſter's perſon, nor ought to eſteem any work unprofitable or trifling, which the preſent circumſtances we are placed in require us to execute.

23. From what has been urged in the laſt Section we may obſerve, that, although Faith be the ſole principle operating to ſalvation, yet there may be faith without ſalvation. The Apoſtle James aſks, If a man ſay that he has faith, can faith ſave him? Peter exhorts to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and ſo forth: Paul declares that if he had all faith ſo as to remove mountains, but had not charity, he were nothing: And a greater than them has declared, that thoſe who

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had ſo great faith as to work miracles in his name, if they were workers of iniquity, ſhall nevertheleſs be rejected at the laſt day. How then ſhall we reconcile theſe ſeeming contradictions, Whoſoever believeth ſhall be ſaved, and hath eternal life; If a man believe, yet his faith cannot ſave him, he muſt add many other things to it, he may ſtill be a very nothing, and rejected at the laſt day? There muſt certainly be ſome variation of ſenſe among the terms employed in theſe propoſitions; and it is moſt likely to be found in that of the word Faith. There is a lively and a dead faith, a right faith, and a wrong faith, or hereſy: but this obſervation will help us little: for it can ſcarce be ſuſpected that the faith ſpoken of in the texts alluded to above, can be underſtood of a weak or heretical faith.

Let us then conſider that in popular language, that is, in the language of the poor, wherein the goſpel was preached, the ſame words are uſed not only for things a little different from one another, but often for different extents of the ſame thing. Thus the word Church ſtands ſometimes for the whole body of Chriſtians, as when we bleſs ourſelves for having been born within the pale of the Church: ſometimes for the doctrine and diſcipline eſtabliſhed by law, as when we diſtinguiſh between the Church and Diſſenters: and ſometimes for the Clergy in

exclusion of the Laity, as when we talk of the power or revenues of the Church. In like manner faith is employed frequently to denote the belief of some one particular article, and as frequently the whole system of religious sentiments which every man respectively is capable of attaining: in which latter sense only it deserves the title of a saving faith. For we see that St Paul, where he speaks of Faith in the restrained sense, calling it a shield, does not think that alone sufficient to enable his Ephesians to stand against the assaults of the devil, but they must put on the girdle, the breast plate, the cuiras, the helmet, the sword, and all those weapons, offensive and defensive, which jointly compose the Panoply or compleat armour of God. A deficiency in one material article destroys the essence of a saving faith, which naturally leads men, where they observe such deficiency, to appropriate the name of faith to that particular article; because a right persuasion upon that, is the only thing wanting to compleat the Panoply. And since all Christian communities have their peculiar distinguishing tenets, such as the bodily presence, the divine institution of Episcopacy, profaneness of forms, ceremonies or vestments, the belief that Christ died for Me, and the like; they are apt to place orthodoxy solely in them, and lay out their whole zeal upon them in utter neglect of

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every thing elſe, or rather to the drawing of mens' attention from other points, at leaſt equally important, wherein all Chriſtians agree. Whereas orthodoxy lies in rectitude of ſentiment upon all branches of our duty, not in the characteric doctrines of any Church, however infallible: nor does faith, as we have ſhown before, conſiſt in a bare, however ſincere, aſſent of the underſtanding, but in a lively, ſtrong, habitual perſuaſion of the mind. Then let the gifted preacher be pleaſed to reflect, that it is as much his office to work practical perſuaſions out of what his audience already know, as to encreaſe their knowledge; to inculcate and draw a profit from thoſe truths they will never hear controverted, as to recover or guard them from errors whereinto they may fall by ſeduction.

There is ſtill another much more allowable cauſe for reſtraining the appellation of faith to a part only of its ſubſtance: for ſince the whole cannot be inculcated at once, but there is ſome one ſtep introductory to the reſt, the teacher, who is to deal with novices, muſt dwell ſolely upon that until it be effected. This may ſerve to explain thoſe texts wherein it is expreſly declared, that whoſoever believeth in the Son, or believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, ſhall be ſaved: for this was the one thing needful for the Jew or the Gentile to make him a convert, and bring him within the privilege of the

the Redemption. We have ſhown in the laſt Chapter, that God has marked out to us various lengths of race for each of us to run in this world, and he that runs the length allotted him, be it no more than a ſingle ſtep, is ſafe: becauſe more can be expected from no man than was put into his power to perform. But the man who has been bred up from his cradle in the belief of Jeſus being the Chriſt, has no ground to think himſelf ſafe with this alone; nor that he has nothing elſe to do than hunt lectures and ſing hymns for impreſſing this article more ſtrongly upon his mind. The whole tenor of the Scriptures declares that ſuch faith will not ſuffice for him that has the means of adding to it, for there are other things needful beſides: but he muſt go on to work a lively faith in all the divine truths which Jeſus taught, each whereof becomes ſucceſſively the one thing needful, as he has opportunity offered for acquiring it.

24. One remark more remains to be made for compleating the idea of faith: I have ſtiled it a ſpecies of perſuaſion; now perſuaſion ſtrictly taken is nothing more than a quick apprehenſion or unreſerved aſſent of the mind to the truth of ſome propoſition: which can never merit the title of a virtue, nor exemplify itſelf in our conduct, being only a ſupply of ideal cauſes directing us how to proceed, but ſuggeſting no final cauſes or motives urging us to

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make uſe of their information. Therefore to make the perſuaſion beneficial and a virtue, it muſt carry ſomething deſirable in the aſpect, which may touch us ſenſibly on the beholding it. Hence it comes that profeſſions of faith run in a different turn or phraſe from the declaration of our opinion concerning common things. A man may expreſs his adherence to the Copernican ſyſtem ſufficiently by ſaying he believes the Sun ſtands ſtill, and the Earth and other planets circle round him continually: but it is not enough to prove his orthodoxy to ſay he believes a God, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, that there is a holy Ghoſt; we are taught in our creeds to acknowledge a belief in God the Father almighty, in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord, in the holy Ghoſt, the holy catholic Church, &c. Which particle In, beſides a bare aſſent as to a certain truth, implies a truſt or affecting expectation of deſirable benefits accruing from God in his three diſtinct perſons or methods of operation, and from the other articles contained.

I have taken notice, in the Chapter of Honour, that the word Sentiment is ſometimes underſtood of a judgement of the mind upon the truth or falſhood of ſome propoſition, but oftener and more uſefully of an inward feeling, a moral ſenſe, or appetence towards the thing apprehended. For a ſenſe of honour does not merely bring us to the acknowledgement that ſuch

ſuch or ſuch a procedure is laudable, but annexes thereto an admiration, a degree of ardency or hearty wiſh to follow the like. This I take to be the true import of an inward feeling, whenever receiving a rational conſtruction, which I fear it ſeldom does in the minds of thoſe who are moſt fond of having it in their mouths: they ſeeming moſt commonly to apprehend it the effect of a ſupernatural illumination, given rather to enlighten the underſtanding, than to warm the heart. Such internal ſenſe then, ſuperadded to the ſincere acknowledgement of religious truths, is neceſſary to conſtitute a virtue, and a perfect Faith in God, or Chriſt, or his doctrines: for no perſuaſions whatever, unleſs touching ſome ſpring of affection, or introductory of ſome ſatisfactory idea complacent to the mind, can either ſecure peace to our own minds, or urge us to the proſecution of our duty towards God, our neighbour, or ourſelves.

And I know not whether a feeling concern for diſtant enjoyments be not the firſt article and neceſſary foundation of all faith: for a man who is wholly guided by the preſent impulſes of appetite cannot reap any benefit from Religion in ſo ſhort a time as the expiration of a week, not that I deny there is an immediate ſatisfaction and benefit in the exerciſe of religious thoughts and practices, but then it muſt be to thoſe who have a reliſh for them, which reliſh,

reliſh, where wanting, can never be acquired in ſeven days; therefore he who cares for nothing beyond the pleaſures of the current week, how firmly ſoever he may be perſuaded there is a God and a Chriſt, can never have a faith in either, becauſe he muſt want that joy in the contemplation of thoſe truths, and value for the remote advantages reſulting from them, which are eſſential ingredients of the virtue. This want I apprehend the cauſe of that multitude of practical atheiſts lamented among us, though we have few ſpeculative: for men are well enough perſuaded of the conſequences of their evil doings, but thoſe conſequences being remote, they do not regard them. It is this hardens the highwayman, and the ſtreet-robber in their wickedneſs: they expect to be hanged ſometime or other, and look upon hanging as an evil; they hope however to eſcape this Year at leaſt, ſo proceed upon the maxim, A ſhort life and a merry one, ſing Hang ſorrow, caſt away care, and fortify themſelves with an utter inſenſibility againſt whatever may happen a year hence.

It is the ſenſibility belonging to faith, which brings it to tally with the virtue of Prudence; for we have ſeen in the Chapter upon that article, that moral prudence does not lie in knowledge nor perſuaſion, for he who knows moſt is the more imprudent upon that account, if he has not a ſenſibility ſtimulating him to make the

the beſt uſe of the lights he poſſeſſes. But prudence was always eſteemed the root of the other Cardinal virtues, which are ſeveral branches growing from the ſame tree: therefore the name of Wiſeman ſtood for that ideal character ſuppoſed to poſſeſs them all, for whoever was compleatly wiſe, muſt of conſequence be courageous, and temperate, and juſt, and benevolent. So Faith is the neceſſary foundation of the two other Theological virtues, which no man can attain without a firm perſuaſion of the truths whereon they are ſupported: and whoever has ſuch perſuaſion, together with an affecting ſenſe of the divine goodneſs ſending every evil for our good, and the mutual connection of intereſts, or that Chriſt will look upon whatever is done to the leaſt of his brethren as done to himſelf, cannot fail of being inſpired with a continual glowing hope and unreſerved Charity. From whence we may conclude that Faith often ſtands as the repreſentative of them, and whenever ſpoken of as the compleatly ſaving principle, it muſt be underſtood in that comprehenſive ſenſe, including the ſiſter Graces, who cannot walk the rough paths of earth without leaning on its ſtrong-built ſhoulders.

25. From all that has been offered in the foregoing pages, may be underſtood, the reaſonableneſs of the Scripture's aſcribing Salvation, Sanctification, and Juſtification, to Faith, and

and laying down that the juſt ſhall live by Faith. Enough has been ſaid already to explain in what manner we are ſaved by this virtue: whatever works we perform here, being of none other avail to our future intereſts, than as they manifeſt and nouriſh our habitual diſpoſitions of mind.

And if we recollect the deſcription that has been given of Holineſs in the Chapter upon that article, it will appear a negative quality, implying an exemption from inordinate paſſions, wicked and ſenſual deſires; which a juſt and lively ſenſe of the divine Attributes and government muſt effectually baniſh. Wherefore thoſe zealots proceed upon miſtaken grounds, who place ſanctity in continual acts of devotion, and having God always in our thoughts; for it conſiſts in ſuffering nothing contrary to his laws to intrude there, and making obedience to his Will the ruling principle of action: nor are the moſt common tranſactions of life, provided there be no inordinate indulgence of appetite in them, any interruptions in a holy life.

26. Juſtification, it has been ſaid, is a term taken from the law-courts; wherein there are but two methods of defence, either to deny the fact, or to juſtify. If a man be impeached for beating another, he may juſtify by ſhewing it was done in his own neceſſary defence: if for falſe impriſonment, he may juſtify under the warrant

warrant of a lawful magiſtrate. Thus in all human judicatures, the juſtification muſt be taken from ſome external circumſtances which can be proved to the court, becauſe man cannot penetrate into the ſecret purpoſes of the heart: but at the bar of conſcience, the intention juſtifies the deed; how unlucky ſoever the event may fall out, yet if the deſign were good, and proceeded in to the beſt of our honeſt judgement, no blame lies at the door. Therefore it is not the outward acts we perform, but the inward ſentiment prompting us to them, that makes our proper juſtification. From hence we may gather confidence in the rectitude of our conduct when having the teſtimony of a conſcience void of offence: for however ineffectual our endeavours may prove, or the reſult of them turn out contrary to our wiſh, however our underſtanding may be darkened or our imagination over clouded, yet if conſcious that our hearts be ſet right towards God, we have a ſolid ground for that ſelf-ſatisfaction which is one of the five requiſites to happineſs.

Nevertheleſs our uprightneſs of heart can juſtify ſuch actions only as it gives birth to: wherefore it is an erroneous and dangerous notion that the Saint can never ſin. It is well known in hiſtory that ſome zealots, in the times of civil and religious confuſion, thought ſo highly of their ſanctity as to imagine it juſtified them

them in any licentiouſneſs, debauchery, or wickedneſs, they had a mind to: and though theſe lengths of extravagance are happily ceaſed, yet are there ſome among us who preſume ſo far upon their ſtrength and earneſtneſs of perſuaſion in one or two particular articles of Religion, as to render them careleſs of their morals, or their conduct upon the common occurrences of life and intercourſe among mankind; but eſteem themſelves juſtified in their cenſoriouſneſs, peeviſhneſs, contempt and uncharitableneſs for their fellow creatures, their indolence and negligence in the duties of their ſtation, or indulgence to certain favourite follies, by the fervency of their faith in ſeaſons of devotion. But each ſeaſon can only be eſtimated by what paſſed in it: winter is never the warmer for the preceding ſummer having been hot, nor can the ſanctity of one deed change the nature of another which had no ſanctity of its own: for our deeds muſt be tried by the principles from whence they ſeverally iſſued. A man ſued for battery or falſe impriſonment, can never juſtify by ſhowing, that upon other occaſions he was uſed to behave peaceably and honeſtly, and has been ſcrupulouſly careful to avoid acts of oppreſſion: the only queſtion being, what warrant he had for the particular fact whereof he ſtands charged.

Thus it appears that we are not juſtified by faith in every thing we do when not proceed-

ing from that principle, for whatever is not of faith is ſin: but it may be ſaid this idea of juſtification does not reach the true Scripture ſenſe, for that if it be a law term, it is not a term taken from our Courts, but from the Jewiſh law, wherein juſtified ſtood oppoſed to condemned, and related to the perſon rather than the deed; ſo that a man may be adjudged juſt and righteous, notwithſtanding ſome human frailties that have led him into actions unwarrantable and manifeſtly unjuſt. It remains then to enquire how faith can juſtify the perſon under theſe circumſtances, who muſt have ſtood condemned without it.

It is the received opinion, as well among Philoſophers as Chriſtians, that phyſical evil is the certain conſequence of moral: therefore no creature can attain a life of happineſs without a total exemption from vice, and a compleat poſſeſſion of all the virtues. For he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole law, that is, liable to the attack of evil which can only be ſhut out by an entire obedience or ſpotleſs innocence: like a town which is not ſafe ſo long as one breach remains open in the wall. As the ſeveral virtues bear a near affinity with each other, and none of them can be had in perfection without having them all, it has been uſual to take the name of ſome one among them to ſtand as a repreſentative of all the reſt. The Philoſophers have pitched upon Prudence or Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, and the ſacred writings, except Solomon, who for the moſt part employs the philoſophic term, upon Juſtice or Righteouſneſs, for the general appellation comprehending the whole body of virtue compleat in all its parts. Therefore the Stoics inſiſted that the Wiſeman, and he only, was invariably happy: yet at the ſame time allowed, that this Wiſeman was an ideal character no where exiſting upon earth, but that all the men ever living here, were fools and madmen, and miſerable. Nor do I imagine the other ſects, though leſs fond of calling names, could pronounce upon any particular perſon, that he had a degree of wiſdom ſufficient to ſecure him againſt all attacks of evil. It is not my buſineſs to examine how they accounted for this depravity of human nature, nor by what means they expected to be inveſted with ſuch conſummate wiſdom in another life, as was neceſſary to make it a life of unabating happineſs: I am only to ſearch out for a rational idea of the Scripture doctrine upon theſe points.

The Scriptures, as interpreted by Chriſtians in general, declare that Man was made upright, until by Adam's tranſgreſſion he loſt his character of uprightneſs, and fell under the condemnation of being a ſinful and miſerable creature, which condemnation was not barely of his perſon but of his human nature, and extended to all his poſterity. For condemnation

does not make a man wicked, but finds him so: it relates to the manifestation of a past depravity till then unknown, for every man has a right to be deemed innocent until the contrary is proved. Therefore the act of disobedience in Adam was not the bane which has worked a distemperature into our constitution, but was itself the trial to shew what human nature is; and consequently must avail alike against all who should ever partake of that nature, as well as against Adam. For you cannot deny that act to have been a sin, but it could not be the cause of itself, nor work the distemperature from whence itself proceeded: it was no more than an evidence or judgement of a distemperature lurking in human nature, though you could not discern it before.

Had you seen Adam while in Paradise, you would have judged him possessed of such Wisdom or Righteousness, as must have ensured him happiness, till upon finding him foiled by the serpent, you alter your judgement; you now stand convinced he had a mixture of folly and frailty in his composition unobserved before, and condemn him as a weak imperfect creature, unable to resist temptations that will lead into grievous mischiefs. And upon the strength of the same evidence you may pronounce the like sentence of condemnation upon every child newly born, not as guilty of actual sin, nor obnoxious to any punishment due to the offence of

his

his primogenitor, but as inheriting the like weakneſs of nature liable to be overcome by the prevalence of appetite and every art of ſeduction, ſo as to be drawn thereby into courſes which can end in nothing beſide eternal miſery. Thus the Scripture concludes all under ſin and the ſpiritual death, from which no man can exempt himſelf by his natural ſtrength: for in Adam all have ſinned, that is, been proved by the bad ſucceſs of the trial made upon him, to be partakers of a nature incapable of perfect righteouſneſs.

Nevertheleſs what was wanting in the original conſtitution of human nature, God has been graciouſly pleaſed to ſupply by the interpoſition of his almighty power in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, uniting himſelf in his ſecond Perſon to the man Jeſus, enabling him to perform an unſinning obedience, and voluntarily lay down his life upon the croſs: who by his example, probably exhibited in the Hades as well as upon earth, together with the doctrines and inſtitutions delivered by him and influence of his Religion upon the world, will raiſe human nature ſome time or other, either in this life or the next, to that perfection which it had not received on its firſt formation. Thus death came upon all men by Adam, and in Chriſt all are made alive. But as a turnpike road is made for the convenience of all his Majeſty's ſubjects, yet multitudes of ſubjects will never travel it; ſo

though Chriſt lived and died for all, yet all will not reap the benefit of his coming. For he has only prepared the way and provided the aids needful for conducting to the completion of righteouſneſs, but it is by faith that each particular man muſt enter upon the way.

Till ſuch entry he remains in his natural ſtate of condemnation, but the firſt ſtep he takes upon the right road, which is done by faith in Chriſt, juſtifies him; and if he perſevere in his progreſs by attaining faith in the comprehenſive ſenſe deſcribed in §. 23, ſo far as his time of life and opportunities will permit, he may be pronounced a juſt or righteous man, in the ſame manner as the ſucking child was pronounced a ſinner: that is, not as poſſeſſed of actual righteouſneſs, but as one who by the means and methods provided in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, will infallibly be raiſed to it; for in the eſtimation of his character he may avail himſelf of the good improvement expectant therein, to which thoſe means and methods are efficacious. This I take to be the true ſenſe of imputed righteouſneſs, and the application of Chriſt's merits to ourſelves: for nothing paſſes immediately from him to us, nor does faith transfer a ſecret virtue or ſupernatural energy, which the freethinker would ſay carried the air of charm and magic, nor operate otherwiſe than by the effect it muſt naturally take upon our mind and motions. Neither can any man

expect

expect to become compleatly righteous in this world, but if he be juſtified or made juſt, it is only by having a reverſion ſecured to him of righteouſneſs in the world to come. Thus both condemnation and juſtification neither change nor declare a man's preſent condition, but that which the circumſtances he ſtands in will unavoidably lead into: and the latter is rather the foundation of a ſure and certain hope, than the inveſtiture of an actual poſſeſſion.

27. Then for what is ſaid, that the juſt ſhall live by faith, if it be underſtood that they ſhall attain eternal life thereby, this is the ſame as ſalvation, of which we have ſpoken before: if that the tenour of their conduct will be ſhaped thereby, this follows from the nature of human action, conſtantly determined by our deſires and ideas, which depend upon our habitual perſuaſions. Therefore thoſe in whoſe imagination the gratifications of appetite and enjoyment of preſent pleaſures appear the moſt deſirable good, will always act accordingly, making it the buſineſs of their lives to hunt after them: whereas ſuch as are intimately poſſeſſed with a true and ſtrong faith in God, his Providence and conſtitution of univerſal nature, will take it for their ruling principle; which of courſe muſt render their actions conformable thereto, for the general aim of their deſire will lie towards the benefits attainable by ſuch actions. And though it be impracticable to take immediate direction

from this principle in every minute inſtance, yet their other rules of conduct will be branched out from this, and it will lie ever wakeful in their minds to withhold them from following any unwarrantable deſire repugnant thereto. So that it may be truly ſaid the juſt ſhall live by faith, becauſe it will infallibly produce a life of righteouſneſs, and makes the eſſential difference between juſt and unjuſt.

And though I have all along ſuppoſed this to be faith in the Father, yet ſince no man can come to the Father unleſs through the Son, the ſame may with equal juſtice be affirmed of Faith in him; for if an adherence to the doctrines of the Goſpel be the ſole neceſſary means whereby a juſt ſenſe of God can be effectually introduced, or kept alive and vigorous in the mind, the juſt may be ſaid to live by faith in Chriſt, which ſecures to them that faith whereby they live, with as much propriety as a man is ſaid to live upon his eſtate, though he does not eat the acres, nor cloath himſelf with the trees, but becauſe with the rents and profits he purchaſes the neceſſaries and accommodations of life.

28. The words attempted to be explained in theſe three ſections are of very little currency among us, and no wonder; for being taken from the Jewiſh language, there is a great hazard of their being miſapplied and miſunderſtood: but there being ſtill ſome ſets of people

very

very fond of ſpending their thoughts upon them, I was willing to lend a helping hand towards aſcertaining their genuine and rational meaning. Yet ſince they are now grown obſolete, it were perhaps expedient for the teacher to lay the old language wholly aſide, and after examining careſully what was the ſenſe intended originally to be conveyed therein, to deliver it in modern dialect more familiar and intelligible to his hearers: wherein it may poſſibly amount to no more than that the Chriſtian Religion has reſcued human nature from that impotence, and ſubjection under appetite and paſſion which muſt have proved fatal; and has enabled mankind to attain ſuch regularity of conduct, exemption from the prevalence of ſenſible objects, and degree of righteouſneſs, as will be the ſufficient preparative for a life of perfection and happineſs in their next ſtage of being. But then this muſt be underſtood of the human race in general, and implies a connection of intereſts between the ſeveral members, ſo that the aid imparted to ſome, may, by ſome means of communication to be carried on in the next world, redound to the benefit of others; becauſe multitudes are born and paſs off this earthly ſtage without ever having an opportunity of reaping any benefit during their abode here.

What has been offered in the preceding ſections concerning the eſſence of faith ſeems deſerving a more accurate conſideration as being

founded upon the ſenſitivo-rational conſtitution of human nature, containing two faculties, underſtanding and imagination, the latter the executive power by whoſe miniſtry alone the other can effectuate her reſolves: and faith is the habit ſetting the impulſes of that to their proper direction. This idea will guide us in our judgements of a man's faith, which are commonly taken according to the rectitude or orthodoxy of his tenets: whereas in ſuch eſtimation it is not ſo material to enquire what are his particular opinions, as what vigour and ſteadineſs of perſuaſion he has in the beſt of thoſe he holds: and if he have ſome erroneous notions they may be preſumed owing to his want of a full and habitual perſuaſion in the ſound ones, which would have better cleared his optics.

This likewiſe may lead us into a right interpretation of Religion, by conſidering its manner of operation and the uſes wherefore it was calculated; which were not ſo much to inform the underſtanding as to ſupply the place of it where deficient in the vulgar, and diſcipline imagination to obey the dictates of reaſon where better informed. Our rational faculty might anſwer our purpoſes much better than it does, if it were always properly employed, and had the inferior faculties conſtantly under command. What we want is, ſomething to direct our thoughts to the moſt profitable objects,

jects, and to impreſs the reſult of thoſe thoughts upon the mind and memory, ſo as afterwards to riſe ſpontaneouſly, and become a perpetual motive of action. This Religion performs by its authority, its doctrines, its inſtitutions, and its general currency, turning reaſon into the proper channels of enquiry, and bringing the trains of imagination and ſprings of affection to take the courſe our beſt judgement would recommend. Bare knowledge does not conſtitute the moral character: he who knows much is a good ſpeculatiſt, yet may ſtill be the carnal man, actuated moſt commonly by the preſent impulſe, or toiling in the ſervice of ſome ruling paſſion, which happens to predominate in his fancy. But he who has brought his knowledge of what is moſt beneficial to become an habitual vivid perſuaſion and ruling principle of conduct, is the ſpiritual or juſt man, who lives by faith, ſo far as the imperfection of his preſent nature will permit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Hope.

THE juſt who live by Faith, ſhall not want the perpetual Feaſt of Hope, heart-cheering manna, peculiar food of man: for ſenſitive pleaſure and gratification of appetite he ſhares in common with the brutes, and taſtes perhaps with far inferior reliſh to theirs. Indulgent Nature, kind to the meaneſt of her offspring, has prepared ſenſual delights for them: food and warmth and reſt, the commerce of the ſexes, and wanton gambols on earth, in air, or water, fill up their employment, and make the value of their lives. They enjoy the momentary pleaſure as it comes; they move by impulſe of objects ſtriking their ſenſes, and follow preſent inſtinct even in making proviſion againſt future wants, whereof they have no apprehenſion.

But to man ſhe has given underſtanding, far ſighted faculty, looking forward perpetually upon good to come, and finding preſent ſolace in the proſpect. At his firſt entrance into life he differs little from his brother animals, affected only by ſenſe like them: but the joyful glee of youthful blood quickly ſubſides; the charm of novelty, that rendered every motion and every

ſcene

ſcene engaging flies off; pleaſures of ſenſe fall rarely in his way, and his hours would paſs irkſome, were he not to borrow amuſement from thoſe in view before him. The mental eye then opens to let in joys the ſenſes cannot furniſh, the joys of expectation anticipating pleaſures yet to come.

But what is that troop of earth-born hopes firſt glittering in the eye of young imagination, like thoſe lucid vapours that at even over the marſh glide meteorous? Play things, gewgaws, diverſions, the uncontrouled liberty of manhood; followed in riper years by fancied ſcenes of riches, power, honours, or martial, poetic, and philoſophic fame. Such proſpects ſeverally may ſooth the fond fancy for the preſent, but quickly involve in the miry ſloughs of diſappointment; or if ſucceſsful prove fallacious of the expectation, or at beſt they ſatiate in the poſſeſſion; for he is counted the moſt wretched of men, who is come to the end of all his hopes.

But thou, celeſtial Grace, ſoft-handed ſiſter and inſeparable companion of ſaving Faith, foretaſte of heavenly joys, perpetual ſource of living waters refreſhing the heart with never failing delight, thou alone canſt exhibit an unfading proſpect; for thou endeſt not but in endleſs uncloying fruition. Chance and external Circumſtance have no power over thee, diſaſter, ſickneſs and adverſity make us cling cloſer to thee

thee, ignorance and involuntary miſtake cannot remove thee from us, nor can any thing beſides our own wilful miſconduct turn thy face away. Preſent reward of virtue, the charm that makes her amiable; thou ſpurreſt on our induſtry, ſweeteneſt our labours, and giveſt confidence in time of trial; the glory thou ſetteſt before us ſtrengthens our fortitude, and blunts the point of thoſe allurements which would urge to intemperance; the ſerenity, chearfulneſs and inward ſatisfaction wherewith thou overſpreadeſt the mind, making it eaſy in itſelf, renders it more ſuſceptible of hearty good will to others. Sole remedy of preſſing evils, the balmy ſalve to heal our ſores, the ſecurity in danger that no intolerable evil ſhall befal: thine anchor firmly fixed in ſolid ground holds us ſteady amid the preſſing blaſts of paſſion, the tempeſtuous ſtorms of fortune, and boiling torrents of vice and folly; and when the ſeas are open, the chearing gales waft us ſmoothly to the deſired port.

Do thou inſpire me with thine exhilerating ſpirit, giving energy and courage but not intoxicating: for the meaneſt well intended labours may claim thy patronage. Afford it then, benign, ſoft-ſhining goddeſs, diffuſe thy mild but piercing rays upon my inward ſenſe; that I may diſcern the tenacious bottom where thou loveſt to caſt thine anchor, the ſtrong-connected golden chain whereby thou holdeſt to it, thy robes

robes and veſture, thy countenance and perſon; and thence mark out wherein thou differeſt from thoſe deluſive phantoms that flatter mortal fancy, and in what few features they reſemble thee.

2. For there is a degree of ſimilitude between all hopes, becauſe they all ſpring from the ſame affection in human nature. For as perſuaſion is the genus, whereof faith is a particular ſpecies: ſo the virtue we have now under contemplation, is a diſtinct ſpecies of that general propenſity prompting the mind to ſolace itſelf in the proſpect of objects apprehended deſirable and attainable. If we make an eſtimate of the enjoyments in human life, we ſhall find that much the greater part of them is ſupplied by hope; for ſenſations ſeldom ſatisfy, and then it is but for a moment: the large vacancies left in them are filled up by deſire tending to ſome diſtant aim, and giving immediate pleaſure in the ſteps taken to attain it. And this accounts for the horror we all have at the thoughts of annihilation, which would deliver us from all our fears, but then it affords no object for deſire to feed on: for it is not inſenſibility that affrights us, we know this to be our portion in ſound ſleep, which yet we fall into without reluctance, becauſe ſleep, being of few hours duration, leaves room for the expectation of ſomething to be done, and ſomething to be enjoyed on the morrow; but hope

is a neceſſary ingredient in genuine deſire; for if deſire fixes upon an end there is no hopes of ever obtaining, it degenerates into the tormenting paſſion Want.

Let us reflect how much of every day's employment is taken up, and every day's amuſement furniſhed by the care of making proviſion for ſomething beyond the preſent moment: it is this ſpurs on our activity, and gives a glee to the exerciſes of it, this ſets our underſtanding at work to contrive for the morrow; and make its well contrived ſchemes delightful, even before they can take effect. This raiſes diſtant aims, that can pleaſe for months and years in the proſecution: it gives the guſt to moſt of thoſe called preſent pleaſures, turns trifles into things of moment, and often proves more valuable than poſſeſſion. The expectation of catching a paltry game conſtitutes the delight in ſports of the field, and changes toilſome labour into amuſement: our cards and dice were no diverſions, unleſs for the proſpect of winning an inſignificant ſtake. In theſe little paſtimes, and moſt of our common purſuits, there muſt be ſome rubs and chances in the way to make them a diverſion; for there is none in packing the cards, or hunting a bag fox, where you are ſure of getting your game without contrivance or trouble: whence it has been ſuppoſed, that hope cannot ſubſiſt without a mixture of fear. But this I apprehend to be the caſe only in things of ſmall value in the poſſeſſion,

poſſeſſion, where the whole pleaſure lies in the movement towards them, which would be of little duration and unengaging, were not the hazard of diſappointment to aſſiſt in prolonging and varying the purſuit.

Therefore when fear and uncertainty enhance the pleaſure, it is from ſome incidental circumſtance, not as being of the eſſence of hope, which can often ſubſiſt in full vigour without them. A man may pleaſe himſelf with providing materials for building a houſe, in proſpect of the conveniencies he ſhall find therein when finiſhed; or with laying out and planting a garden, in contemplation of the ſhady walks, the arbors, the elegancies, the fruits to grow in it after a length of time; or with the reverſion of an eſtate to fall in ſeven years hence: and all this not the leſs for his meeting with no diſappointment in the proſecution of his ſchemes, nor ever entertaining a ſuſpicion that his expectation may be fruſtrated. So there is no inconſiſtency in the expreſſion of a ſure and certain hope: for every ſolace of mind taken in the thought of a deſirable good to come, with full aſſurance that it will come, deſerves that appellation, and is the ſame kind of affection, different only in degree, as if the aſſurance were abated by a tincture of fear and uncertainty.

Our hopes and fears are the main ſprings that actuate our motions: and according as we proceed under the influence of either, our

time paſſes agreeably or uneaſily. Whoever could contrive means to live conſtantly upon hope, would be a happy man: for this when warm and lively, ſweetens labour and alleviates pain, and furniſhes a delicious entertainment, if the cup be not embittered by the apprehenſion of danger of diſappointment.

3. Hope ſpreads her table moſt plentifully when ſerved by Deſire, that is, when there is ſomething at hand to be done towards attaining its completion; for then it multiplies and approximates, making the ſeveral ſteps expedient to be taken, ſo many intermediate objects of hope ſucceſſively as they occur: for elſe, if it be fervent and have no work to keep the active powers in play, it is apt to corrupt into impatience, which is one of the moſt grinding ſpecies of Want. Therefore I conceive it was happier for Jacob in being put to earn his miſtreſs by a ſeven years ſervice, than if he had only been promiſed her after waiting that time: becauſe impatience might ſpend itſelf in aſſiduity to the taſk enjoined.

Nevertheleſs an aſſurance of good to come can give delight, although no endeavours of our own be needful to procure it; and the pleaſure riſes in proportion to the degree of aſſurance, which will prove moſt durable when founded upon rational grounds; yet it too commonly ſtands upon another bottom, eſpecially in ſanguine and volatile tempers. For there

there being a great pleaſure in believing, that what we like will certainly befal us, this alone often ſtands in lieu of evidence: it can work perſuaſion without aid of conviction, and effectually ſhut the mind againſt every ſuggeſtion that might tend to invalidate it. When people ſet their hearts upon a thing ſtrongly, you ſhall ſee them hope againſt hope, turn the moſt romantic poſſibility into a certainty, and poſſeſs themſelves with aſſurance of ſucceeding in their expectations upon none other grounds than becauſe the thought is ſoothing to their imagination. Theſe hollow-grounded hopes, the airy fabric of ſelf-indulging fancy, though pleaſing for the preſent, prove very pernicious and often fatal in the conſequences, ſlackening our induſtry, taking us off from the purſuit of real advantages we might have worked out, and making us let go the bird in hand for ſake of two in the buſh.

It is obſerved, that lotteries make the common people idle; every one that has but the eighth part of a ticket, promiſes himſelf a proportionable ſhare in the great prize, and waſtes his time in forecaſting how to lay out the produce, when he ſhould be employed in getting his livelihood. Young people juſt come into poſſeſſion of a ſum of money, juſtify themſelves in ſquandering it away, upon a notion that they ſhall find twenty ways of raiſing a fortune again, though they could never yet muſter up

application enough to earn a ſixpence. Tradeſmen, newly entered upon buſineſs, ſet up their equipages, and ſpend upon the fancied profits of ſucceeding years. Vanity builds as much upon achievements that will be made, as upon works already perfected. How many projectors perſiſt obſtinately in their ruinous ſchemes againſt all reaſon and experiment? How much do the orthodox in theory indulge themſelves in vicious pleaſures upon full preſumption of long life and health, and that repentance will come upon them of its own accord juſt when needful without their ſeeking it? In ſhort moſt of the hopes that tinſel the gay and buſy hours of life, are fantaſtic, unſubſtantial, precarious and fragile, or quickly end in diſappointment, or when attained fall below the expectation, or furniſh but a ſhort career of employment in the purſuit, and require a continual ſupply of freſh aims to keep the thoughts in play, which elſe muſt ſtagnate, unleſs good fortune and external cauſes throw in new engagements juſt as the old ones begin to ſatiate.

Nor is mankind leſs ſubject to vain and imaginary fears, for fear will ſtand upon as narrow ground as hope: were there a lottery wherein one ticket ſhould doom the owner to be hanged, the apprehenſion of drawing the fatal lot would terrify as much as the great prize elates: for fear multiplies chances, and makes a certain miſchief of the remoteſt danger.

Hopes

Hopes and fears ordinarily chequer human life, yet though they mingle, it is like oil and water, they will not incorporate, but take their turns alternately in giving ſolace or uneaſineſs, and that ſometimes in very quick ſucceſſions: but which of them ſhall predominate depends in great meaſure upon conſtitution, upon chilneſs or warmth of the blood, objects ſurrounding or ſympathy from perſons ſtrongly affected with either. For we are often made to hope by others hopes, and fear by ſeeing them affrighted: therefore perſons of very ſanguine or melancholy diſpoſitions cannot do worſe than in conſorting with thoſe of the ſame complexion.

4. This then being the caſe with all ſublunary hopes, that they cannot ſecure a happy life without a lucky concurrence of circumſtances not in our power to command; a competence of health and ſubſiſtence, a natural eaſineſs of temper, a prudent education, keeping the mind clear of turbulent paſſions and reſtleſs deſires, a taſte for innocent amuſement, a ſucceſſion of practical aims to hold attention engaged, a quiet and peaceful ſituation with reſpect to things external: all which ſeldom coincide in the ſame perſon, nor continue without frequent interruptions. Since then this is the caſe of earthly hopes, let us look up for that hope which comes from heaven, which lies open to all, which when well grounded and

rooted, can afford comfort in every ſituation, and which will never depart from us to the laſt moment of our lives.

The object of this hope, in its utmoſt extent is no leſs than the whole lot of our exiſtence, which beheld by the eye of faith exhibits an incomparably larger proportion of enjoyment than trouble: and what few troubles there are, appear productive of good greatly overbalancing their preſſure. But this extenſive proſpect is too large for imagination to graſp, unleſs in ſome few ſeaſons of retirement, when we can ſtretch our faculties to the utmoſt verge of contemplation. The reſidence in the Mundane Soul, or that final ſtate of happineſs which is the effect of pure bounty, not of preparation or reward, like the diſtant ſtars, may chear the eye, but lies too remote to warm the heart with a gleam of feeling hope; nor would avail for common uſe, becauſe we know of nothing that can be done for haſtening our arrival, or improving our condition there. Wherefore it is enough for practical purpoſes to bound our thoughts within the conſequences of our conduct here upon earth, and thoſe in the ſucceeding ſtages of our journey through matter, commonly called the next life; which how many centuries it may laſt, God only knows, to whom a thouſand years are as one day. This then is our eternity, nor need we think of any thing beyond: it is like the ocean, which we term

term boundleſs, becauſe the eye endeavouring to traverſe it, loſes itſelf on all ſides in undiſtinguiſhable air.

But a proſpect to be compleat ought to contain ſome pleaſing objects near the eye, which cannot dwell perpetually upon a uniform horizon however luminous, without being refreſhed from time to time by leſs diſtant ſcenes that can be diſcerned diſtinctly. Nor need we want thoſe nearer ſcenes to keep up our engagement: for the hope of eternity is ſo far from being incompatible with temporary hopes, that it generates them in a never failing ſucceſſion. There is always ſomething to be done for promoting our future intereſts, ſome duty to be fulfilled, ſome good purpoſe to be driven at, ſome opportunity to be improved in the exerciſe of our active powers, or management of our thoughts: and thoſe aims will ſupply us with a conſtant ſeries of freſh hopes for the ſucceſs of our ſeveral endeavours. Nor will diſappointment cut us ſhort in the proſpect; for we may ſtill hope the event will turn out to our benefit, or that we ſhall find means of making ſome good uſe of it. And when danger threatens, we may hope, if not to eſcape the evil, at leaſt to receive it with ſuch firmneſs of mind as that it ſhall not hurt us, but rather work out ſome unſeen advantage.

5. The effects of this hope are not to be looked for in tranſports and extaſies, for nothing

violent can continue long; but this hope, deſigned to afford a durable ſupport, produces a ſteady calm ſerenity, which like the equal flow of health, gives life and eaſe to all our motions: for if it be well formed and ſtrong, it will prove the ruling principle of action, ſhaping our plan of conduct, and all our inferior aims will branch out from it. We ſhall conſider this world as preparatory to the next, and truſt in Providence for having placed every man in the ſituation beſt adapted to prepare him for the functions he will have to execute, and the enjoyments he will have to expect hereafter. We ſhall then ſurvey our powers, the materials and opportunities afforded us for uſing them, the works we may perform with them: taking direction for our meaſures from their tendency to promote content and peace of mind, and all other means of happineſs, external and internal, among mankind, not forgetting our own enjoyments, wherever they can be had without greater detriment to enſue therefrom: for we are parts of that mankind whoſe temporal intereſts are our ſureſt mark to guide us in ſecuring our future hopes. We ſhall lay out our ſchemes great and ſmall upon this bottom, ſetting ourſelves reſolutely to do important ſervices whenever an opportunity opens; when none offers, turning our hands to any preſent entertainment of perſons near us, or our own innocent amuſement.

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For our activity will never be uſeleſs to us if rightly applied, even in the ſmalleſt matters, when nothing better lies within our reach: and as men ſhall give account for every idle, that is, intemperate word and thought; ſo every right action, thought and word, however trivial, yet if beſt ſuited to the preſent occaſion, ſhall be placed to the credit of their account. Hence we may gather a conſtant ſelf-ſatisfaction in all our motions, our very recreations and pleaſures will afford a ſincere delight unmingled with any bitter reflection, our lawful profeſſions, our worldly cares, the daily tranſactions of life will not appear loſs of time nor avocations from our principal work. For the ſame God, being maker of all worlds viſible and inviſible, has conſtructed each in every particular ſo as to anſwer the purpoſes of the reſt: therefore we are to eſteem nothing trivial and unavailing that befals in his laws of nature and courſes of Providence; and may believe, that every right action which the preſent occaſion calls for, is the work we are called upon by God to perform, and though it does not make ſo large ſtrides as the arduous exerciſes of virtue, yet advances us ſomething forward towards our final goal.

The like reflection may ſatisfy us with whatever occurrencies or outward accidents happen wherein we had no hand, for we may truſt they have their important uſes, which we cannot

not diſcern, and are the moſt appoſite that could be choſen for the purpoſes intended: for all things even thoſe ſeemingly the moſt inſignificant, work together for our good. When the ſight of diſaſters or calamities force us to think of the many dangers and miſchiefs incident to human life, we may confide in the mercy of Providence for diſtributing them where they will fall lighteſt, and putting each perſon to that kind of trial which he is beſt able and beſt qualified to go through. And when evils actually come upon us, we may regard them as our ſhare in the neceſſary burdens of public ſervice: we know they are but temporary, and may conſider ourſelves in them as earning ſome certain unknown profit, or at leaſt that the joy of having ſupported them manfully will be a near reward to compenſate for the preſent trouble. If it be not in human nature to receive perfect eaſe under the moſt preſſing evils from the ſalve of hope, it will at worſt aſſuage the ſmart, and caſt in gleams of ſoothing comfort at frequent intervals. Thus the efficacy of this virtue extends to all we do, and all we ſee: it brightens the ſcenes around us, and fills up our time with intereſting engagements, it gives confidence in danger, inſpires vigour in difficult enterprizes, and juſtifies in trifles and amuſements, it ſweetens our pleaſures, and alleviates our pains.

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6. All this, it may be ſaid, exhibits a glorious proſpect in contemplation, but how ſhall we find it practicable to gain ſo ſtrong and lively a hope as ſhall work ſuch powerful effects? For paſſion and human infirmity often ſurprize us into meaſures that juſtly check our hopes, or when beſt diſpoſed the darkneſs of our underſtandings leaves us uncertain what courſe to ſteer, and raiſes ſuſpicions that we may be doing wrong when moſt careful to do right: but without confidence in the rectitude of our conduct there can be no ground for hope to ſtand upon. Now I fear it is but too true that ſuch vivid hope as above ſuppoſed never yet was found among the ſons of men; but it is our buſineſs to examine things in their perfection, and when we ſee what excellent fruits they will produce in that ſtate, it will be an encouragement to approach as near thereto as poſſible, for we ſhall reap a benefit proportionable to the advance we make.

Hope then has a natural tendency to ſmooth the ground for itſelf to walk upon, for it takes off our eye from thoſe little aims and fond deſires which ſtir up the paſſions obſtructing its career, and diſpels the clouds that make us ſuſpicious of our judgement being faulty. For invincible ignorance and unavoidable miſtake are no faults, and may well conſiſt with confidence in the rectitude of our conduct: we become diffident when we miſtruſt that ſome ſecret bias has

has warped our judgement to determine againſt evidence, that we have not weighed the point impartially, nor given it the full conſideration we might, and ought. But in proportion to the vigour of our hopes it will abate the cauſes of that diffidence; for where the treaſure is there the heart will be alſo; and ſince it is the evil inclinations of the heart that pervert the judgement, whenever that is ſet right we ſhall judge fairly upon the lights before us, which how imperfect ſoever they may be, we ſhall quickly ſee what they direct to; and the conſciouſneſs of having made the beſt uſe of them, without obſcuring them by any miſts of our own raiſing, will give us a confidence in the rectitude of our meaſures, though we may be doubtful of the ſucceſs.

7. Such then being the natural effects of hope, it will be worth while to cultivate it with all our diligence: but if it ſtand upon a tottering foundation it will have ſtrength to produce none of them; it may pleaſe the fancy a little in time of eaſe, but will fail us when we want it moſt. Wherefore it behoves us to build our hopes upon a ſolid foundation, which cannot be laid ſurer than in the full conviction of our reaſon upon a fair and careful examination of the grounds and ſeveral ſtages whereon we raiſe them, for theſe we are to underſtand by the golden chain wherewith the goddeſs holds to her anchor.

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I have done mine endeavours in the courſe of this work towards tracing the links of this golden chain, and ſhewing their ſeveral connections, by the dependence of effects upon cauſes all derived from one original, by explaining how Freewill takes her turns upon antecedent motives flowing from the ſame ſource, by the divine Goodneſs, diſtributing a far greater proportion of enjoyment, than ſuffering evidenced in our experience of the world around us, by the Attribute of Equity enſuring to us our full ſhare of the good diſtributed, by the nature of Juſtice founded upon expedience for the general good, and by the reaſons alledged in ſupport of this life being preparatory to the next. But whether any body ſhall find this method fit for his uſe or think another preferable, it will behove him to ſatisfy himſelf well and thoroughly in every ſtep he takes, that he may ſecure a well grounded confidence in his determinations, not liable to miſtruſt and ſuſpicions afterwards.

That this can be done by the force of human reaſon exerting itſelf in philoſophical diſquiſitions, remains to be proved by experience of ſuch as ſhall ſet themſelves ſtrenuouſly to make the trial: but how good ſoever their ſucceſs may be, they will find it impoſſible to render the whole proceſs whereby they attained it clear and ſtriking to the generality of mankind, who are much better able to paſs a judgement upon hiſtorical evidence and matters of fact, than upon

upon metaphyſical obſtructions. A ſeries of ſupernatural events and revelations for many ages from the beginning of the world, is evidence of a ſuperintending Providence that cannot fail to work upon the dulleſt apprehenſion. The methods taken in the redemption of mankind, the promiſe of ſalvation to all who will lay hold of it, can leave no room to doubt of the divine mercy and goodneſs. A ſyſtem of rules and doctrines recorded from the mouths of teachers authentically commiſſioned from God, remain a certain fund from whence to draw thoſe ſentiments of his Nature and Attributes, and thoſe meaſures of conduct whereon our hopes may be directly founded, without the intervention of long reaſonings to ſuſtain the fabric. Whoever is ſufficiently convinced in his honeſt judgement that theſe are the foundations whereon he may ſecurely reſt in his hopes, let him inculcate them ſtrongly upon his mind by frequent meditation, and by due practice of the inſtitutions eſtabliſhed for that purpoſe, that his conviction may become an habitual perſuaſion: for till then, it will not cheriſh him with a conſtant gleam of hope, nor obtain a ſteady influence upon his conduct.

And becauſe happineſs in the abſtract without idea of any particular enjoyments whereof it may conſiſt, though ſufficient to ſatisfy the judgement, does not touch the affections ſo much as when figured by ſenſible images, there-

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fore it may be ſerviceable to employ ſome hypotheſis to give ſcope for imagination to expatiate upon. For this purpoſe what I have ſuggeſted before concerning the vehicular ſtate, may ſerve for ſuch as can fall into the train of thinking there purſued: but for thoſe who can conceive no ſenſe nor activity unleſs in a human ſhape, and a body more than five feet high, the images of thrones, white robes, palms, and chanting perpetual hallelujahs, are ordinarily propounded. Whatever particular ſcheme of enjoyments a man can think of with moſt conſiſtence and probability in his own conception, will ſuit him beſt: for the intent of it is not to prove any thing, but to give a fuller apprehenſion of what is already proved upon other grounds.

8. This apprehenſion is the thing that turns our knowledge into Faith, and makes the neceſſary foundation of Hope: for the contemplation of a deſirable object, while there is a ſuſpicion that we cannot attain it, or that it will not be procured for us, can at moſt amount to a wiſh, it can never riſe to hope. Faith underſtood in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, includes hope: and then only produces the good effects aſcribed to it in the laſt Chapter, of ſaving, ſanctifying, juſtifying, and enabling us to live a life of righteouſneſs. For it conſiſts in a ſtrong perſuaſion of the important truths of Religion, and a touching ſenſibility of the benefits expectant,

tant therefrom, as has been already obſerved in §. 24, of the ſame Chapter. But very commonly it is uſed in a more reſtrained ſenſe, being confined to the perſuaſion alone, and then the ſenſibility becomes a diſtinct virtue, taking the name of Hope. This often miſleads the zealot to place his dependence upon orthodoxy or meer perſuaſion: whereas faith in this narrow acceptation will anſwer no good purpoſe effectually; it can neither ſave, nor ſanctify, nor juſtify, nor be the actuating principle whereby the juſt ſhall live, its uſe lies only in ſerving for a baſis whereon to erect a more beneficial ſuperſtructure. Therefore it is neceſſary to add to our faith the virtue of hope, which may give us a feeling ſolace in the truths we acknowledge, and urge to the proſecution of thoſe advantages they repreſent as attainable. For it is hope that draws a preſent fruition from joys at a diſtance, and raiſes a deſire to purſue the meaſures needful for obtaining them. From hence it appears that hope bears as near an affinity as faith to the cordial virtue of Prudence, which conſiſts not ſo much in extent of knowledge or ſtrength of perſuaſion, as in a quick ſenſibility of remote good, giving it the preference before preſent impulſe, enabling us to make uſe of our knowledge and follow our perſuaſions. And the ſame principle conſtitutes the eſſence of Fortitude and Temperance, which do not lie in an inſenſibility of danger or taſteleſſneſs of pleaſure,

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nor yet in a ſpeculative judgement of the rectitude and expedience there is in hazarding the one, and foregoing the other: but in a vivid engaging proſpect of the advantages to be purchaſed by undergoing peril, pain and ſelf-denial. Therefore that faith which removes mountains and paſſes undiſmayed through fiery trials, muſt be aided and ſpurred on by a fervent glow of hope, or it could never perform thoſe exploits.

But fear too muſt be founded upon perſuaſion, for without an apprehenſion of impending danger there is nothing to be afraid of. Which apprehenſion is ſo far from being an ingredient in perfect faith, that in many inſtances it is miſchievous and blameable: an inſenſibility and hardneſs of temper againſt inevitable evils and ſuch as are prudential, that is, expedient to be undergone for ſake of the good conſequences redundant from them is a deſirable quality, were it practicable by mortal man, and is mainly productive of Fortitude. Fear is ſo far only ſerviceable as neceſſary to beget caution, which may awaken our vigilance and ſtimulate our induſtry in the proſecution of meaſures likely to ward off an impending evil. Therefore there is a holy fear ſtrongly recommended in the Goſpel, which has its foundation in faith, as ſpringing from a quick apprehenſion of the dangers of wickedneſs: and which produces attrition, the firſt ſtep towards repentance. Yet is this fear never ranked among the theological

virtues, as being no more than a ſuccedaneum to ſupply the deficiency of hope; therefore can never be wholly laid aſide with ſafety by us imperfect mortals, in whom there is always more or leſs of ſuch deficiency: but if our faith could once riſe to its full completion, ſo as to actuate us with a fervent hope, or perpetual appetence of the happineſs put into our power to attain, there would be no uſe for the ſuccedaneum, nor would it be compatible therewith; becauſe carrying always ſome degree of uneaſineſs, for in all fear there is torment.

The aim propoſed to be attained by Religion, is called by two appellations, Salvation and eternal Life, which are moſt commonly coupled together or uſed promiſcuouſly as ſynonymous terms, becauſe if the one be obtained the other will follow of courſe: yet are they diſtinct objects, one exhibiting a deliverance from miſery, the other an inſtatement in actual happineſs. And the former may be ſeparated in idea from the latter, for annihilation or perpetual ſleep would effectually ſecure a deliverance from miſery: ſo that the Lucretian hypotheſis did not want grounds to flatter its votaries with the hopes of ſalvation, though it afforded no proſpect of poſitive enjoyment, much leſs of eternal life. But thanks be to God who has now put it into our power, not barely to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, but further to inherit the promiſe of eternal life by a ſteady

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truſt in the diſpenſations of his Providence: this then is the brighteſt ſide of our proſpect, reflecting the moſt cheriſhing warmth to ripen our theological virtues. Wherefore it ſeems an indiſcretion in ſome teachers to dwell too much upon the word Salvation and the wretchedneſs eſcaped thereby; for ſuch language chimed inceſſantly in the ears, is apt inſenſibly to introduce a terror and melancholy over the imagination, by confining it perpetually to the contemplation of diſmal objects, and keeping it an utter ſtranger to thoſe exhilerating ones, which would ſupply conſtant fuel to the pleaſing flame of hope, and make Religion chearful.

9. Hope and fear, as I have obſerved before, are the two main ſprings that actuate human life, and this as well in the exerciſes of Religion as in our common tranſactions. Fear is uſually employed firſt, becauſe you have nothing to propoſe to the carnal man capable of exciting his deſires; ſo you can only rouze him by the terror of miſchiefs to enſue if he perſiſts in following the bent of his perverſe inclinations: therefore Religion is repreſented in the light of duty and obligation, and the acts of it as matter of neceſſity, not of choice. But after the old deſires are worn off, when a liking is acquired to right action, and a ſatisfaction expected in the performance of it, there is room then for the ſpring of hope to play; which having taken good hold on the wheels of action, they will run more

ſmoothly and do their work more effectually than while impelled by fear. Therefore the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom, but perfect love caſteth out fear, and rendereth it needleſs: for whoever has a hearty deſire to do as he ought, has no occaſion to think of the conſequences that would follow upon omitting it; his liking to the work will carry him through it better than any ſlaviſh dread that might hang over him,

Nevertheleſs it is but too frequent among perſons of the ſtricteſt piety that they act more upon motives of terror than of hope; they are rather ſollicitous to eſcape hell than to gain heaven, and have the miſeries of the former oftner in their thought than the joyful proſpect of making advances towards the latter: thereby making a grievous burden of Religion, which God has given us for our trueſt ſolace, and for a more ſolid enjoyment than any ſenſual pleaſures can afford. He has declared that his yoke is eaſy and his burden light; therefore if we find the yoke galling and the burden heavy, we may be ſure it is owing to ſome miſtake or miſmanagement of our own. But that Religion has taken this melancholy caſt, proceeded from the wicked artifices of deſigning perſons in thoſe ages when it was made an engine of policy and ſpiritual tyranny: for they well knew, that the more they could terrify mankind, the eaſier they might govern them, and how advantageous

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it muſt prove to themſelves to exclude all other hopes than ſuch as could be purchaſed from them for money, or for the moſt abject ſubmiſſion and implicit obedience.

When our forefathers had reſcued themſelves from this oppreſſion, ſtill it was not eaſy to turn men wholly out of their old train of thinking; many injudicious preachers, thoſe eſpecially who pretend to ſet up a purer form of Religion than the eſtabliſhed, ſtrove to affright rather than invite their hearers into it: the terrors of the Lord were diſplayed in full colours, the doctrine of the ſtrait gate was ſtrongly inſiſted on, and the gate made ſtraiter than ever the Goſpel deſcribed it, impracticable heights of devotion required, and religious exerciſes incompatible with the buſineſs of life enjoined as indiſpenſible duties, holineſs made to conſiſt in the exceſſive uſe of what is only the food to ſuſtain it, and perfection greater than human nature can reach exacted under pain of reprobation. Such ſtrains as theſe perpetually chimed in the ears often raiſe great diſquietudes in the minds of the ſerious and well-diſpoſed, making them uneaſy in what ought to be their comfort: for becauſe they cannot riſe to the fervours of faith and ſtrictneſs of diſcipline enjoined, they continually diſturb themſelves with the thoughts of not being good enough, and therefore ſtill remaining children of perdition.

10. But the ſaving faith as deſcribed in the laſt Chapter, conſiſts in right ſentiments of God, his Attributes and dealings with mankind, not in a right eſtimation of our own actions, or a perſuaſion of their coming up to the terms preſcribed in the Goſpel: therefore it is a groundleſs fear that ariſes in the weakly pious from the want of this perſuaſion, which is not want of faith. They believe in the power and mercies of God without reſerve, and make no doubt he will fulfil his promiſes to ſuch as perform the conditions annexed to them; if then they ſhould fail of the aſſurance they have real grounds to entertain of their having performed the conditions of acceptance, this is a misfortune but not a ſin, it muſt neceſſarily make them uneaſy for the preſent, but does not affect their future intereſts, nor are they the worſe men for thinking themſelves bad: to make their caſe a want of faith they muſt believe they have complied with all the terms enjoined, and yet that they ſhall be never the better for it, which is a kind of terror they never fall under; ſo their diſtruſt is not of God, but of themſelves and their own performances.

Nevertheleſs as ſuch diſtruſt is not only painful but a hindrance to their progreſs, for a man never does his work ſo well as with a decent confidence of ſucceeding, let us endeavour to probe it to the bottom; and in order thereto

examine

examine how we are to underſtand your good people when they complain of not being good enough. If they mean not ſo good as to render it needleſs to ſeek any further improvements in their power, this is a degree of goodneſs they muſt never expect to attain; and were it made neceſſary to ſalvation, no man could be ſaved, for there is none that doeth good, ſo much good as he ought, no not one. The Apoſtles themſelves never pretended to be good enough in this ſenſe: Paul had a meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, and received his heavenly gifts in earthern veſſels: Peter thrice denied his Maſter, and after the effuſions of Pentecoſt was ſo much in the wrong, that Paul found it neceſſary to withſtand him to the face: and John declares, That if any man ſay that he hath no ſin he deceiveth himſelf and the truth is not in him. Therefore no man is ſo good but that he ought to watch and improve every feaſible opportunity of making himſelf better: nor has juſt cauſe of diſquietude becauſe there ſtill remains room for making further advances in faith as well as good works, and attaining purer and fuller ſentiments than he yet poſſeſſes of God and his promiſes.

If by good enough be underſtood, enough to bring them within reach of the divine acceptance and mercies, let them remember that theſe are not confined to an unſinning obedience, but extend to all who come to God by a lively

faith; which faith is manifeſted in an habitual diſpoſition and ſincere deſire to do his Will. But that there are other deſires aſſaulting the mind is no proof of there not being this: temptation and human infirmity may overpower, ignorance or error may overcloud, want of preſent opportunity may ſtagnate, but do not deſtroy it: in theſe caſes it lies dormant, its activity remains ſuſpended, but it is not dead. If we find it awakening in us ſpontaneouſly at frequent intervals, prompting to good works as often as a fair occaſion opens, perpetually ſtruggling with the enemy, uneaſy when maſtered, and operating as a principle of action whenever we have the free command of our motions; we may know there is ſuch a habit ſubſiſting alive within us, and may truſt it will find acceptance with the ſearcher of hearts.

This life is a warfare, and as ſuch liable to various turns of fortune, we muſt expect often to be foiled by the enemy, and though we may often overcome we muſt never expect an entire conqueſt: but in war nothing is ſo dangerous as a ſudden panic or a ſettled deſpondency; and though vigilance and caution be neceſſary, courage and confidence are more neceſſary to ſupport a combatant in the day of trial. Therefore we may turn our fears againſt themſelves, as having moſt reaſon to be afraid of being afraid: for terror and trepidation would unſtring

ſtring our nerves, and deprive us of judgement to make our beſt defences, and the beſt uſe of our advantages.

In order to get rid of our fears, it will be helpful to know the ſources from whence they ſpring: one is the indiſcretion of teachers and writers of good books, who lay down that as an indiſpenſible duty which is only the proper aim of our endeavours; for theſe two are very different: He that ſhoots at a target may aim at the white ſpot in the middle, without thinking himſelf undone if he ſhould miſs it: ſo to aim at perfection is certainly commendable, but to attain it cannot be a duty becauſe it is impoſſible. We are taught, Be ye perfect, as your Father which in heaven is perfect: but this is propoſed as an object of our ſincere wiſhes, not a rule of our conduct; for ſurely no man can expect to equal God himſelf in holineſs and rectitude.

The ſame indiſcretion likewiſe miſplaces our aim by fixing it ultimately upon religious exerciſes and acts of high devotion, which are only means of ſtrengthening our habitual diſpoſition of acting rightly in the duties of our ſtation, and our intercourſes among one another, of reſiſting the impulſes of paſſion and inordinate appetite, and of behaving with propriety according to every preſent occaſion in active life; for by our manner of performing theſe, we may ſhow our obedience to the Will of heaven

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as much as by our mental ſervices, and by theſe may make proof whether the others have been effectual: whereas by deſpiſing rectitude and propriety of conduct in common matters, which yet are duties in their proper ſeaſon, may loſe many opportunities of ſatisfaction they might receive in purſuit of feaſible aims wherein they would acquit themſelves well, and fix their eye upon impracticable aſſiduities and arduous heights of Religion, wherein they muſt meet with continual diſappointment and alarms at having fallen ſhort of their intention.

Another pernicious miſtake of indiſcreet zeal lies in teaching men to judge of themſelves by compariſon; they muſt be better than other people or they are wicked creatures, they muſt aſpire at Saintſhip and become heroes in Religion, or they are nothing. This may be called a ſpiritual ambition, which always draws after it a ſpiritual pride, making them cenſorious, unequitable, turning every thing to the worſt ſide, and ſo rigid in their notions of righteouſneſs, that they cannot themſelves come up to the terms they exact from others; which unavoidably muſt fill them with vexation and deſpondency. I would nor diſſuade any man from aſpiring to the higheſt degrees of virtue he ſhall find feaſible, nor even from heartily wiſhing to attain greater heights than he can reach: but why may not he do this without thought of ſurpaſſing others? I have ſhown in the

Chapter

Chapter on Vanity, that there is a material difference between the deſire of excellence and the deſire of excelling: rectitude of ſentiment and action are excellencies in themſelves without reference to what other people think or do, and if our conſcience bears us witneſs that we have a ſincere habitual deſire of them, what hurt is it to us that thouſands beſide have the like teſtimony? There is room in heaven for us all, and we might be glad to perſuade ourſelves that all without exception ſhall get thither; but ſince we cannot find ſufficient warrant to believe this, let us ſtand diſpoſed to make as few exceptions as impartial reaſon and candour will permit.

Nor ſhall we fail to find our own account in this procedure, for a man may much eaſier and more rationally ſatisfy himſelf that God is good to multitudes than to a ſmall ſelect number: his dependence will reſt better upon the largeneſs of divine mercy than upon his own peculiar merits. Therefore he need not be ſhy of giving every body their due, as well of commendation for their well-doings, as of excuſe and extenuation for their miſcarriages, whenever there is room for it: for he will then be entitled to take the ſame allowances for himſelf he has uſed to make for others; his conſcience will follow the rule in the Goſpel, With that meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again; and he may employ the like ſtile of

prayer

prayer as taught us there, Father, judge of our treſpaſſes with the ſame favourable conſtruction as we have judged upon the treſpaſſes of our neighbour.

Thus the three virtues concur in ſupporting one another: Charity which thinketh no evil, ſtrengthens our Faith, enlivens and brightens our Hope: on the contrary the narrow minded, the ſpiritually proud, the ſevere and the rigid, are ever found to abound moſt largely in miſgivings, terrors, and diſquietudes for their own ſafety. Yet a great deal depends upon natural temperament and the ſtate of our bodily humours: there are ſome in whom you can ſcarce raiſe an alarm, and others whom you can never inſpire with a chearful thought, how juſt reaſon ſoever there may be for either; but there are few without their viciſſitudes of temper. When the blood runs chill and the ſpirits low, there is an uneaſineſs which, having no apparent cauſe is generally miſtaken by perſons of a ſerious turn for uneaſineſs of mind, and gives occaſion for groundleſs ſuſpicions that all is not right there: they are moſt ſolicitous then to paſs a judgement upon themſelves, and the judgement they paſs is always unfair and unfavourable. Wherefore it behoves us to obſerve the mechanical turns of our imagination, and when ſenſible of them, to reſerve our ſelf-examinations for thoſe ſeaſons wherein our judgement is cleareſt and our underſtanding

ing moſt open: and if we make our deciſions carefully then, we may preſerve a confidence in them afterwards, though we ſhould loſe ſight of the reaſons whereon they were grounded.

11. But fears cannot be baniſhed preſently, nor ought they to be let go unleſs in proportion as there is a better principle ſpringing up to actuate our motions: therefore the beſt way of caſting out fear is by inuring the mind to hope, and making it our buſineſs to ſeek for thoſe ſources from whence it may be drawn, which after a little practice, will appear not to be ſo ſcarce nor ſcanty as might have been imagined before making the trial. But it behoves us not to take up our hopes too haſtily before we have well ſatisfied ourſelves of their foundations, and ſettled them thoroughly in our judgement: for if any of them ſtand upon hollow ground or appear to totter upon a ſubſequent review, this will fix ſuch a ſuſpicion upon the reſt that we ſhall never be able to place a ſecure dependence upon them.

The hope of a bleſſed immortality, if well grounded, is a never failing ſource of ſatisfaction whenever the mind ſtands in a ſituation and temper to contemplate it ſtrongly, and throws in many a pleaſing reflection at intervals between our worldly engagements. But this is too remote a proſpect for mortal eye to feed conſtantly upon: nor need it, having other ſupplies from nearer objects lying in the line towards

towards this. Therefore it is a miſtaken zeal that would fix our thoughts always upon heaven and heavenly joys, and keep up a perpetual glow of ardency towards them: for they are propounded to us not ſo much for our preſent amuſement, as for engaging our deſire of taking the ſteps leading to them; and if it be recommendable ſometimes to raiſe a degree of fervour in contemplating them, it is in order to transfer a proportionable warmth to our reſolution, ſufficient to carry us through the meaſures requiſite to obtain them, and ſurmount the obſtacles lying in the way.

The perſuaſion of this life being in every part of it preparatory to the next, may ſatisfy us that there is always ſomething to be done more or leſs, for advancing our future intereſts: for there is a right and a wrong in every action how trivial ſoever, and the acquitting ourſelves well in it is a ſtep in our progreſs, which affords an immediate object for the eye to fix upon. Our knowledge of the divine goodneſs gives us aſſurance that the way to happineſs lies open to every man, and the paths of it diſcernible to ſuch as earneſtly ſeek them: therefore if we be heartily deſirous of the end, we have a reaſonable hope of finding the means; for deſire naturally urges to ſeek, and he that ſeeketh ſhall find, to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened. Thus hope generates hope, and our attachment to the ultimate aim is a certain ſecurity for ſucceſs

ceſs in the intermediate, for ſucceſs conſiſts in having acted for the beſt upon every particular occaſion, and the deſire of ſo doing will direct to the means of its own gratification.

If we lie ſometimes under uncertainty which part to take, we may hope for a ſpeedy iſſue of our doubts, and that we ſhall neither determine too haſtily nor remain diffident of the determination when made: for the buſineſs here is not to decide unerringly, but to make a proper uſe of the lights we have. Our faculties and means of information come from Providence, which we may be ſure has apportioned them to us in ſuch meaſure as to ſuffice for our purpoſes: therefore while following what they clearly point to, we are ſecure of a ſolid ſatisfaction. If difficulties overpower us, there is a pleaſure in having ſtruggled with them, which will urge us to hope we may ſucceed better another time. If conſcious of not having done ſo well as we might, we may reflect that perfection is not attained preſently, and may expect that our habitual deſire of acting right will ſtrengthen itſelf by frequent exerciſe. If we do not diſcern the expedience of our rules, yet we may confide in them that ſooner or later we ſhall feel their good effects. Even when we deny and humble and afflict ourſelves, which there is no reaſon to do unleſs for ſake of ſome greater good appearing conſequential therefrom,

therefrom, either to our own judgement or upon the authority of rules, we may encourage ourſelves to proceed by contemplating the proſpect of that greater good; when pains and loſſes and afflictions fall upon us, we may reflect they will have an end, that we ſhall receive a joy from the degree of fortitude wherewith we have ſupported them, and may ſay with Eneas, The time will come when we ſhall look back upon their ſcenes with pleaſure.

But though we may juſtly expect great things from our fortitude when hope and practice have nouriſhed it up to ſome degree of vigour, yet it will become us to avoid the arrogance of the Stoics, who ſet up their Wiſeman in defiance of Heaven, as ſtanding above the reach of fortune; for that being wrapped up in his integrity, he could remain unhurt amid the ſoreſt evils. But it is a vain imagination to think we can ever raiſe ourſelves above the reach of accident, or gain ſuch a firmneſs of mind as can never be ſhaken; our dependence muſt reſt upon that Power whoſe diſpoſal fortune lies under, and what fortitude we can acquire will ſerve as being a recommendation to his favour: while we ſtrive to do what we can for ourſelves we have a rational ground to truſt in his goodneſs, that he will ſuffer no evil to befal us, but will, with the temptation, alſo make a way to eſcape, or ſupply us with better ſtrength than

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we have now belonging to us, that we be able to bear it.

The ſame Power likewiſe having placed us in this world aſſigned to every man his ſtation therein, given us appetites, deſires and neceſſities, formed us into a compoſition requiring continual refreſhments both of body and mind, we may preſume all things were ordered for our benefit: therefore in the buſineſs of our profeſſion, the proviſions for our accommodation, our compliance with cuſtoms, our little intercourſes of friendſhip and civility, our recreations and innocent amuſements, provided there be no vicious indulgence, but every thing be done in its proper ſeaſon without being a hindrance to any more important work, we may hope that what we do will tend to ſome further profit beſides the preſent engagement. For every moment of time that is not miſpent is well ſpent, and is not loſt nor fruitleſs, how trivially ſoever employed, provided there were no feaſible opportunity at hand for employing it better.

Would your righteous people, inſtead of ſtriving to work themſelves up into continual tranſports greater than human nature can ſupport, conſider the duties of active life; what they owe to the world, to ſociety, to the care of their health, and preſervation of their ſpirits, without which they cannot perform their higher

duties with effect and vigour, and lay out their plan of time accordingly; this would furniſh them with variety of practicable employments, the proſpect of ſucceeding wherein, would prove a conſtant ſucceſſion of under-hopes branching out from the principle, or at leaſt compatible therewith: and while actuated ſeverally by theſe inferior hopes, they may be truly ſaid to be doing the Will of God, though they had him not at the time in their thoughts, and would promote their future intereſts in the gratification of their preſent deſires. For enjoyments rightly purſued, is our proper aim: we are not ſent here to be miſerable, and there wants nothing more than the fixing our deſires upon their ſuitable objects, to reconcile the pleaſures of this life with the hopes of another.

But till we can provide ourſelves with a ſet of hopes, all growing from the principal, to fill up our time and anſwer all occaſions that may happen, it will be neceſſary to employ fear as a ſuccedaneum to ſupply the place of ſuch as are wanting: therefore it well deſerves our beſt diligence and contrivance to encreaſe our ſtock, that we may have the leſs need of ſuch a troubleſome ſuccedaneum; for when hope and deſire urge to the ſame point that fear would drive at, the latter becomes wholly ſuperfluous. The Apoſtles, though they preached

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up the wrath to come, for prevailing with ſuch as could not be worked upon without it, yet for their own uſe they had not in contemplation the terrors behind them, but the joy that was ſet before them. And whoever could find means of imitating them, ſo far as to live always by hope, muſt lead a happy life: the ſervice of God would to him be perfect freedom, he would think nothing of duty and obligation, but do his work continually out of choice and inclination. Nor would he confine his hopes within his own centre, he would ſtudy to make his demeanor not only right but inviting, and communicate his happy temper by ſympathy to as many as he could: for ſoft-handed Hope whoſe ſoothing touch makes the poſſeſſor eaſy in himſelf and pleaſed with all around him, never fails to open the heart for giving a readier admittance to her elder ſiſter Charity.

CHAP. XVII.

Charity.

THEE laſt, but not the leaſt in dignity or value, thee everlaſting Charity, let me invoke: and well may I ſtile thee everlaſting, for thy years are not to be counted, nor of thy Being is there beginning or end. Thou waſt with God before the Worlds were made, co-eval with the Attributes: thy mild perſuaſions moved him to create; it was they firſt prompted infinite Wiſdom to contrive, and employed Omnipotence to execute, the glorious univerſal plan. Thou ſtill inclineſt the Almighty Maker to preſerve his ſtupendous work, to uphold the perfect order running throughout the whole, to bleſs the creatures he has made; and under thine unceaſing influence will he proceed throughout all the boundleſs ages of eternity. Thy younger ſiſters Faith and Hope, he gave for ſolace and direction of mortal men while groveling in this vale of wretchedneſs and darkneſs; but when admitted to their native home, then ſhall Faith be loſt in intuition, and Hope be ſwallowed up in bliſsful experience: thou alone, immortal Charity, ſhall enter with us into the heavenly abodes, ſhall place us in our

our ſtations there, and incorporate us into the bleſſed ſociety.

For thou filleſt heaven and earth, pervadeſt the mighty Whole of Nature, and formeſt the ſinews that knit together all the parts and members in amicable concord. Thy ſilken cords ſuffice to hold the moſt perfect creatures to the throne of Glory; through them they derive their bleſſings, and by them are drawn to pay their free obedience, for they know not fear, they think not of obligation, but thine impulſes are to them inſtead of laws, to keep them ſteady in performing the Will of God, and mutually promoting the happineſs of each other. From thee proceed their mighty powers; for thou produceſt perfect union, and union raiſes weakneſs into ſtrength.

The earth that holds down heavy bodies in her ſurface, is but a maſs of matter diviſible beyond the reach of human comprehenſion; the Sun, whoſe potent graſp compreſſes the wide wandering orbs around him, is but an aſſemblage of innumerable atoms: it is the united force of imperceptible particles that together form that gravitation which fixes the everlaſting mountains, binds down the reſtleſs ocean within his capacious bed, entangles the unconnected air that it diſſipate not in empty ſpace, keeps the Moon conſtant in her monthly courſes, curbs in the huge planetary Worlds and roving Comets that they trangreſs not the

due bounds in their wildeſt excurſions. Yet matter joins in thoſe great works by blind neceſſity, one general law runs through the component parts of an enormous maſs, and compels them to act in concert as one agent: but this law muſt be be adminiſtred, and the force whereby it prevails, begun by ſpiritual ſubſtance; for body can only tranſmit the motion it has received, and is but the channel not the origin of the impulſe it conveys.

Whence then that all-affecting power of the Mundane Soul, which agitates the ſtupendous Whole of univerſal matter? that ceaſeleſs energy, unfailing ſource of gravitation, coheſion, and repulſion, which draws remoteſt bodies to one common centre, which binds the parts of metals in indiſſoluble compact, which works the wheels of animal and vegetative life, darts the expanſe of light around with inconceivable velocity, excites the ſtill ſwifter vibrations of all-pervading Ether, and gives exhauſtleſs vigour and activity to the lifeleſs lump. From harmony and union ſprings this prodigious ſtrength of the Mundane Agent, for the component Spirits are ſingly weak, perhaps ſcarce able to ſtir a grain of duſt that flies before the wind; it is the efforts of innumerable hoſts, uniting in the ſame deſign, that ſuffice for every mighty work of nature. But what cements this perfect union, and makes them act as one individual Agent? What elſe but unreſerved,

unreſerved, fervent, unabating Charity? For blind neceſſity finds them not, impulſe cannot affect them, to pain and fear they are utter ſtrangers, and rigorous law holds not her ſcourges over them: but choice and judicious inclination are the conſtant ſprings of their activity.

Their filial love to the almighty Father, perpetual fountain of endleſs bleſſings, holds them attentive to obſerve, and ever ready to fulfil his Will, inſpires them with ardor to execute his high beheſts, and makes them joyful to ſerve as inſtruments in carrying on his gracious plan of Nature and of Providence. Their mutual ſincere good-will to one another prompts them to communicate their lights throughout the vaſt ſociety, from whence reſults their boundleſs intelligence; and doubles their zeal to aſſiſt in preſerving that regularity in the material world, which they know requiſite to ſerve the uſes and promote the happineſs of the ſpiritual: nor is their joy abated by the ſmallneſs of their ſeveral powers, becauſe as large as wanted, and ſufficing for their ſhare of concurrence in the moſt important works; for Charity exults in the ſmalleſt good offices, when conſcious they were the beſt that could be done, and were all that the occaſion rendered needful.

Their affection for the congenial Spirits immerſed in matter, cut off from all communion

with the Mundane hoſt by ſurrounding walls of fleſh, urges them to attend their wants: they flock by thouſands, as occaſion requires, to work the ſprings of animal machinery, to carry on the vegetative proceſs, whereby the earth yields her encreaſe, to marſhal and commix the elements, and prepare for the impriſoned exiles all the accommodations and pleaſures they can receive, or the general order eſtabliſhed from above will permit: well knowing that whatſoever ſervice they do to one of the leaſt of theſe their brethren is done to the common Father of heaven and earth, and is an addition to the ſtock of happineſs in the univerſal family.

By thee then, all-chearing all-ſuſtaining Charity, we may approach the neareſt to our elder brethren enthroned above in realms of bliſs and glory: by thee beſt may we attain ſome faint reſemblance of our Maker; for God is love, and without it the mightieſt of his creatures are but nothing. How ſhall I bring thee down to aſſimilate earth to heaven? how paint thy features to the ſons of men? Art and invention cannot hit thy likeneſs: to draw thee juſtly, the pencil muſt be guided by the heart. Whoſo has taſted of thy ſweets needs no perſuaſions to ſeek after more, nor much pains to acquire more: for thine inſinuating graces once admitted improve themſelves daily, and to him that hath ſhall be given, and he

he ſhall have abundance. But thou muſt firſt be introduced by proſpect of the benefits received from thee, of which there is not wanting plenty to invite the conſiderate beholder.

Thou ſtrengtheneſt Faith, for the good man can eaſieſt perſuade himſelf that God is good, and place the firmeſt heartieſt truſt in Providence: but the ſelfiſh ſees no goodneſs that does not immediately touch himſelf. Thou enlargeſt Hope, for thy candid well-wiſhing eye diſcerns enjoyments all around in the remoteſt and leaſt valued of our fellow creatures; thereby beautifying the face of Nature, and diſcovering wider ſtreams of that bounty whereon our hopes depend. Thou overcomeſt ſluggiſh indolence, for heartineſs to ſerve turns labour into pleaſure: thou giveſt joy in performance of the ſlighteſt kind office; art the ſole lawful means of making another's good our own, becauſe thou alone canſt make it ours without diſpoſſeſſing him. Thou feaſteſt on good wiſhes when there is room for nothing elſe, canſt rejoice in the proſperities of former ages, diſtant countries, and remoteſt poſterity; canſt feed imagination with ſchemes of beneficial ſervices; canſt ſeek, and readieſt find comforts in the diſtreſſes and uſes in the evils thou beholdeſt.

When thy well-woven bands unite ſocieties, they act with greater vigour and to better purpoſe, than private intereſt, fear and cobweb law, can make them; and wert thou to prevail through-

throughout mankind, thou wouldeſt baniſh war and injury, cozenage, waſte and idleneſs, vanity and competition, and reſtore a paradiſe upon earth. And though thou canſt not work thy full effect in ſingle perſons amid a ſelfiſh world, yet who ſo could attain thee genuine, undebaſed by miſtake or weakneſs, would find he had acted prudently, and how little ſoever he might be able to benefit others, had taken the readieſt road to his own ſatisfaction of mind and trueſt ſelf-intereſt.

2. For ſelf-intereſt rightly uaderſtood is the only ſolid baſis of all our virtues: whatever refined ſentiments we may pretend to, they might upon a fair and careful examination be traced to that origin. Self muſt be acknowledged to lie at the bottom of all we do, and to be the firſt mover of our activity: human nature is ſo conſtituted, and perhaps all created nature, nor can we conceive the higheſt intelligences to do any thing unleſs for the benefit or ſatisfaction found in the deed; for it is the privilege of God alone to act upon pure diſintereſted bounty without the leaſt addition thereby to his own enjoyment. I have endeavoured in my Chapter on the Paſſions to explain in what manner our ſincereſt affections take riſe from our wants and pleaſures, as the ſweeteſt flowers grow out of the dirty ground: thus the mire of ſordid appetite muſt be the ſoil wherein to plant them all; but Faith is the ſtem to bear this choiceſt bloſſom

bloſſom Charity, which will never blow ſtrong and healthy without a perſuaſion that the intereſt of our fellow creatures is our own; and Faith ſtands moſt unſhaken when growing from the root of ſolid judgement and rational conviction.

People are apt to ſay they bear a general good-will to others, becauſe they are taught it as a duty, becauſe they hear it univerſally applauded, becauſe they ſhould be aſhamed to want it, and think they have it becauſe they ſay ſo: their profeſſion is ſo far hypocritical that it deceives themſelves, or if it does ſometimes make a faint effort to bloom in a real affection, it ſcarce ever produces the fruit of good works, for the leaſt trouble in the performance oppreſſes it, the ſlighteſt croſs accident withers it up, or ſenſual pleaſures and engagements blow it quite away. For affection cannot be learned as a leſſon, nor performed as a duty, nor infuſed by ſhame, neither can it ſubſiſt without an opinion of the object affected being beneficial or ſatisfactory. Therefore it behoves us to examine thoroughly and impartially the grounds of our believing that the good of others is our own, and to ſettle well the ſeveral ſteps whereby we arrive at that concluſion.

Let us conſider calmly and ſeriouſly whether every effect, as well in the mind and imagination of ſentient creatures as among the operations of matter, muſt not have its adequate cauſe, whether our conſtitution, our vigour of body and mind

mind, or our good fortune, were originally of our own procurement; whether we could undertake to have behaved with the ſame degree of diſcretion, ſobriety and rectitude we do, had we been born with diſtempered bodies or imperfect organs, without ſight or hearing, or bred up among black-guard boys, or hottentots; therefore whether our virtue, as well as our other advantages, were not derived to us from external ſources. Let us then reſolve with ourſelves whether all thoſe ſources did not flow from one origin, The Firſt Cauſe; whether we can imagine him to have made any proviſion of ſecond cauſes without exact knowledge and particular purpoſe of all the conſequences they would produce: and whether it does not follow from thence, that our condition, both in bodily endowments and mental acquiſitions, is preciſely ſuch as was allotted us.

Theſe points being eſtabliſhed, let us next examine whether there is any reaſon to believe he has allotted unequal portions of his bounty to his creatures, among whom there is no intrinſic or other difference than what aroſe from the ſituation, and circumſtances wherein he placed them. That he has power and full authority to deal with them as he pleaſes we can have no doubt, nor ought we to murmur at receiving leſs than others, for we have no claim to what we do receive; but what ground is there to ſuſpect he will beſtow his favours partially?

Men

Men are led to make a difference in their dealings with one another by intereſt, by expedience, by accidental liking or averſions, by benefit or hurt received, by example, by humour, by the ſmallneſs of their powers which can reach but to a few; none of which motives can take place with him; and what warrant have we to ſuppoſe he will act arbitrarily without a motive, only becauſe he may, and becauſe none can hinder him? From whence it may be concluded, that his kindneſs extends alike to all in their whole exiſtence, and if it appear to flow unequally in ſome ſtages of their Being, the difference will be compenſated in others: ſo that there is one general fund of bounty and happineſs throughout the Univerſe wherein we all are partners, each having his proportionable intereſt in the whole, and therefore concerned with whatever tends to make the leaſt encreaſe or diminution of the common ſtock; and conſequently we cannot add to it by doing good; nor take from it by doing hurt, to any fellow creature, without profiting or endamaging ourſelves.

Let us likewiſe contemplate the nature and aim of Juſtice, which can be ſuppoſed none other than to keep ſenſitivo-rational Beings ſteady in the proſecution of their mutual intereſts: therefore reward or puniſhment muſt be annexed to every action and ſentiment according as it conduces to promote, or obſtruct the

the general good; and it may be expected that whatever good or evil is done to any, will rebound upon the head of the doer. But if any finds this chain of reaſoning too intricate for him to manage to his ſatisfaction, let him take the ſhorter plainer road of authority, and have recourſe to the ſacred writings: where he will ſee that loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourſelves, are the hinges whereon hang all the law and the prophets; that theſe are the firſt and ſecond commandments, to which there is added none other to make a third, for what other precepts are given bear a reference to them, and are virtually contained in them: that we are exhorted to imitate our heavenly Father, who is good and gracious to all, who cauſeth his ſun to ſhine and ſendeth the rain on the juſt and unjuſt; to follow the example of our Redeemer who went about doing good, preached to publicans and ſinners, laid down his life for enemies and rebels; that by giving a cup of cold water and doing every kind of good offices to our brethren we do a ſervice to God himſelf; pave the way to everlaſting bliſs, and work the foundation of all our hopes and expectations; that if we beat and miſuſe our fellow-ſervants, we ſhall ourſelves be treated accordingly, and with whatever meaſure we mete, it ſhall be meaſured unto us again.

3. But

3. But the flowers grow out of the dirt, whatever of it enters into their compoſition becomes purified in the paſſage, and they retain nothing of the foulneſs in the original from whence they ſprung: in like manner Charity, though ſhooting moſt vigorouſly from rational ſelf-love, yet when perfectly formed has no tincture remaining of the parent root; for if we cannot ſerve another without firſt thinking of our own advantage or of the divine command, our ſervice may be prudence, or it may be piety; but it is not charity, nor have we gained this virtue until it can operate in us as a principle of action without aid of other motive, and we find ourſelves prompted inſtantly to perform good offices upon the ſole conſideration of their being ſuch. Our reflection is not large enough to carry conſtantly in view the remoteſt conſequences of our proceedings, nor the reaſons inducing us to enter upon them; nor ſhall we ever do our work effectually until we take a direct liking to the work abſtracted from the wages, and that becomes the object of inclination which was firſt recommended by reaſon as prudential.

But we have ſeen in the proper place, that it is the nature of Tranſlation to throw deſire from the end upon the means, which thenceforward become an end capable of exciting an appetite without proſpect of the conſequences whereto they lead: and that our habits and moſt of the deſires

deſires that occupy human life are of this tranſlated kind. Therefore when we have fully ſatisfied our Judgement upon the foregoing conſiderations, that doing good to others is our intereſt, it will be expedient to inculcate this concluſion frequently upon our minds, and ſeek opportunities of acting in purſuance of it; for by continual contemplation and practice, we ſhall quickly get ſuch a habit of kindneſs as will urge us to a compliance therewith upon every occaſion offering, inſtantaneouſly, before we have time to reflect that it is our intereſt: and in proportion to the vigour of this habit, and its ability to overpower lazineſs, trouble, humour, vanity, and ſelfiſh deſires, we are poſſeſſed more or leſs of the virtue of Charity.

And we may aſſiſt our progreſs in making the acquiſition by means of our particular affections, gradually aſſimilating our general goodwill to the manner of their impulſes. I preſume there is ſcarce any among us, who has not ſome friend, or brother, or wife, or child, or benefactor, or companion whom he can ſometimes when in beſt humour, take pleaſure to oblige without expecting therein the gratification of any other appetite. Let him then reflect on the motions of his heart upon theſe occaſions, and he may learn from thence how to ſtand affected, I do not ſay with the like fervour, but with the like ſincerity, towards other of his fellow creatures: until by often practiſing this

leſſon,

leſſon, the pleaſure of pleaſing in general becomes one of his favourite pleaſures, for which he has a ſenſible reliſh and habitual propenſity. For our natural and accidental conjunctions are the eaſieſt ſteps by which we may riſe to be citizens of the world, and members of that body whereof he, who was the firſt born of every creature, is the head. And this was figured in the Platonic allegory in the Viſion, where Thalaſſian Venus was made conductreſs to the Uranian, for ſhe firſt opened the heart of Pſyche, taught her to look beyond herſelf; and prepared her for reception of the graces of the celeſtial Goddeſs.

4. Nevertheleſs there is a very material difference between the Virtue and the common run of inclination: the former being really and truly perſonal, the latter but nominally ſo. But what leads us to miſtake the name for the reality, is the general abuſe of the word perſon, which is often underſtood of a man's ſhape and make, but ſeldom reaches beyond his bodily compoſition, or his character and qualifications; whereas it has been ſhewn in former Chapters, that Perſon properly denotes the ſpiritual ſubſtance, abſtracted from all its modes of exiſtence; for theſe may be and are continually varied, but perſonality is what makes a man to be himſelf, can never be diveſted from him though he were to paſs through a thouſand metamorpho-

ſes, nor is interchangeable with that of any other creature.

Therefore when a young fellow falls in love with a girl, whatever he may fancy, it is not her perſon he admires, but perhaps her pretty face, her ſprightly eyes, her delicate ſhape, her genteel carriage; or at beſt her ſweetneſs of temper, her diſcretion, her underſtanding and accompliſhments. In conjugal affection encreaſed by years, it is the long intimacy, the endearing converſe, the union of intereſts, the partnerſhip of cares and troubles and pleaſures, that charms the ſoul. Parental fondneſs riſes from the conſideration of being our own blood, the habit of attending to the cares of nurture and education, the hope of ſeeing the good fruits of our endeavours, the ſolace and ſupport expected from returns of duty. In a friend we love his ſincerity, his honour, his ſimilitude of temper, his capacity to ſerve or pleaſe us, his readineſs to join in mutual intercourſe of good offices. Thus all our affections fix upon ſomething belonging to the perſon diſtinguiſhable and ſeparable from it, ſome natural endowment or ſubſequent acquiſition, or relationſhip to ourſelves: all which depend upon the ſtructure of the body or mutual organization, or ſituation wherein the object ſtands with reſpect to us; and any other perſon or ſpiritual ſubſtance whatever placed in the like circumſtances, would have engaged us as ſtrongly.

While

While inclination remains in this ſtate, it is not quite removed from ſelfiſhneſs; for we feel no emotion towards the perſon without thinking at the ſame time of ſome quality or circumſtance thereto belonging, apprehended beneficial or agreeable to ourſelves. But in time and by degrees affection may grow more refined and purely perſonal, ſo as to remain unabated after death has diſſolved all connections, and removed the object from us, when it can no longer do us any benefit or pleaſure, and after the want of thoſe ſweet intercourſes we regretted ſorely at firſt is worn off by rolling years.

Were we to ſuppoſe Fables realized, and that I ſhould find my Euridice in the body of a bird or a lap-dog, methinks I could take great delight in tending and procuring it all the enjoyments it was capable of receiving, even though it ſhould retain no remembrance or knowledge of me: on the other hand were I to meet with another perſon exactly and undiſtinguiſhably alike both in body and mind, ſtill while I knew it was another, and not individually the ſame, it would not quite ſatisfy; but I might ſtill be apt to talk in ſome ſuch ſtrain as Milton's Adam, Should God create another Eve, and I another rib afford, yet thought of thee would never from my heart. For in my moſt ſerious meditations, when contemplating our proſpects in futurity, it is an additional ſolace to hope that ſhe already gathers thoſe fruits of a well-ſpent

life which hang in expectation only to us below: and could I have certain intelligence of that happy ſituation and manner of paſſing her time fancied in the Viſion, it would be the moſt joyful news I could receive.

Now to vary the ſcene, let us ſuppoſe a perſon ſhown a child, who he could be aſſured would twenty years hence be to him a faithful wife or boſom friend, in whoſe company and converſation he ſhould find great happineſs; I imagine his affection would be anticipated, and he would ſtand diſpoſed to wiſh well and do benefit to the party, before he could receive any returns therefrom.

Since then ſuch is the nature of the human mind as that it can entertain perſonal affection upon the remembrance of paſt, or expectation of future ſources of endearment, why cannot we make this affection more general by a diligent application of the methods we have at hand for introducing it? What though we ſee nothing in the greater part of our fellow-creatures to engage us at preſent, we may know that in the worſt formed bodies and moſt untoward organizations, there lies an immortal ſpirit, which we may hope will one day be partaker with ourſelves in a ſtate of glory, of conſummate intelligence, of noble ſentiments, of pure love, of mutual kindneſs, and exalted happineſs.

If

If there be any now a days ſo whimſical and heterodox as to hold the old exploded doctrine of pre-exiſtence and eternity of creation, he may turn his whimſies to an excellent uſe by employing them as a foundation of his Charity. The moſt deſpicable creatures he ſees in the ſtreets, cloathed in deformity and naſtineſs, pent up in narrow conceptions, their ideas groſs, their deſires ſordid, their thoughts groveling, their underſtanding ſcarce better than the brutes, over run with croſs-grained humours, untoward diſpoſitions, turbulent and tormenting paſſions, with fears and wants and wiſhes, regrets and envyings, ſtrifes and animoſities, and all diſeaſes of the mind: the moſt ill favoured and unfortunately circumſtanced of theſe objects he may conſider did once, perhaps not many years ago, lie together with himſelf abſorbed in the Mundane Soul, in perfect bliſs, exalted underſtanding, enlarged views, and univerſal love. He may behold in them an old acquaintance, having lived with him for many ages in cloſer intimacy and intercourſe of purer friendſhip, than the deareſt connections here on earth can produce: and though now for a time disjointed, disfigured, rendered unſociable, fallen from their high original, he may ſympathize with them as fellow ſufferers, only immerſed a little deeper than himſelf in the jakes of matter, the drain of the Univerſe: he may cordially wiſh them well, and ſtand ready to embrace every

opportunity that ſhould offer of rendering their impriſonment more tolerable. Herein imitating the Author of their Being, who only permits the diſcerption, the fall and debaſement of his ſpiritual ſubſtances, for public ſervices unknown to us; yet forgets them not in their loweſt depravations, but remembers mercy in the midſt of Judgement: and though he may ſuffer them to incur much ſeverer puniſhments than any this world experiences, becauſe the exigencies of government require it, he will in due time interpoſe with his Omnipotence, if he has not already provided natural cauſes for the purpoſe, to deliver and reinſtate them in their primitive purity, happineſs and concord whereto they were created.

5. Thus each man, whatever his peculiar notions be, if he has any ſerious well-digeſted ones, may find ſomething in them which properly applied, will help to make his affection perſonal; and when it is ſo, it becomes genuine Charity, which in its nature muſt be univerſal, becauſe every creature however circumſtanced, has a perſonality and a capacity of receiving good and evil, to be the object of our deſire. Therefore the truly charitable man will ſtand diſpoſed equally to all his fellow-creatures, but the exerciſes of his benevolence muſt neceſſarily be limited and directed by his powers and opportunities; he will employ his endeavours in the ſervice of thoſe near him, not becauſe beſt entitled

entitled thereto, but becauſe in a ſituation capable of receiving moſt benefit by him; and if he diſregards any, it will not be for want of good will, but for want of ſkill, or ability to profit them. He will always purſue the greater good, promoting that of the public, or of numbers where he can, and where he cannot, applying himſelf to ſtudy the benefit of any within his reach; by important ſervices, if ſuch offer, or in failure of thoſe, by any pleaſure or little obliging office the occaſion preſents.

We are directed to take the pattern of our Charity from our ſelf-love, and taught to love our neighbour, not as we do our child, our brother, or our friend, but as we do ourſelves: now we do not love ourſelves for being handſome, or wiſe, or witty, or good tempered, or accompliſhed, or virtuous, or born in ſuch a place or family, nor for any adjunct or circumſtance obſerved in us, but for being ourſelves. If we be diſtempered, deformed, wretched, and involved in crimes, this does not abate our fondneſs, which reſts directly upon the perſon: and from hence we may learn to bear a like perſonal regard for others, however circumſtanced.

Perhaps it will be ſaid, it is not poſſible in human nature to affect another in equal degree of fervency with ourſelves; I believe it is not, neither is it poſſible to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, yet both theſe are among the precepts enjoined us: but they are

propounded not as indiſpenſible duties, for nothing above our nature can be ſuch, but as objects of our conſtant endeavours; and by due application of our endeavours we may attain ſuch a degree of perſonal good will to others, as by balancing our other deſires, ſhall keep us ſteady in the courſe of conduct we were deſigned to run. For our having Charity does not infer that we muſt be void of all other deſires: if we have that hearty and genuine, we have done well, though it ſhould not ſo wholly engroſs our minds as to exclude every motive beſide: it will indeed baniſh ſelfiſhneſs, but ſelfiſhneſs, as has been ſhewn in a former place, is not the having a regard for ourſelves, but having no regard for any thing elſe. For univerſal Charity is not incompatible with private Prudence, nor particular affection; ſo far from it that it encourages and furniſhes us with rational inducements to cultivate them, as I hope to make appear in the ſequel.

6. For the proper object of Charity is the greater good of our fellow-creatures with whom we have intercourſe: now let us ſuppoſe we were all taken with ſuch a romantic fit of generoſity as utterly to neglect our own pleaſures and intereſts for thoſe of one another, how would the world go on the better for it? Had my Euridice and I undertaken every day to put on one another's cloaths, and cram victuals into one another's mouths, regardleſs of our own

wants

wants, I fear we ſhould both have been very aukwardly cloathed and fed. Or had I an intimate friend fifty miles off, and out of prodigious affection we ſhould each ride away from his own houſe to take care of the other's eſtate, we ſhould ſcarce find matters managed entirely to our ſatisfaction: we ſhould ſoon be tired of this extravagance, and agree, for mutual benefit, each to mind his own affairs, and leave the other to himſelf. There are numberleſs inſtances wherein men may know and ſeverally provide for their own occaſions, better than they could do for another: and therefore if they were to omit to do ſo, there would be a grievous loſs of happineſs among them all.

And the ſame reaſon juſtifies us in running into little ſocieties and partnerſhips, for our powers being ſmall, the effects of them would be utterly loſt, like a handful of ſalt thrown into a pond, if diffuſed among too many; whereas by ſeverally confining our ſervice within a compaſs where they may be felt, they will prove of real value, and the good of the whole will be beſt promoted. We may likewiſe remember that we are but ſenſitivo-rational animals, and neither reaſon nor perſonal Charity can do their work ſo effectually, as when aſſiſted by ſome mechanical impulſe. Therefore it is prudent and highly commendable to cultivate our particular affections, for they will gradually become perſonal, lead us nearer to a general

neral good will, and do the work of charity though by another ſpring. It is better a man ſhould do good to one or a few than nobody, and he will do it more vigorouſly and effectually where he ſtands inclined to the party, than he would without ſuch incitement: beſides that our own pleaſure deſerves regard when it does not tend to any thing hurtful, and we ſhall have more of it in performing the ſame ſervice for a friend than for a ſtranger. So that the world is better ſerved upon the whole, and better pleaſed, by means of our private affections, than it could be without them.

Nor indeed could it be ſerved at all without them, for a man that is void of natural affection never has any humanity, nor concern for his fellow-creatures: he can only be lured to aſſiſt them undeſignedly by ſome advantage or private aim that happens to coincide with the public benefit. And ſince none of us have ſo perfect an humanity as would invigorate us ſufficiently upon all occaſions, it will be expedient to encourage ſuch regard to profit, to honour, or credit, or claim to mutual aſſiſtance in our own needs, or other ſchemes and amuſements hitting our fancy, as will prompt us the ſame way. Thus whereas duty has been commonly holden divided between our neighbour and ourſelves, each being entitled to a ſhare of our time, and that we may juſtifiably do many things for our own emolument without refer-

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ence to him; it now appears that both branches, if rightly laid out, unite in anſwering the ſame end.

For while we follow the rules of ſound prudence in the conduct of our private concerns, and harbour only innocent and allowable deſires, we ſerve others by ſerving ourſelves, and advance the general good in purſuing our own gratifications. The mechanic who works to raiſe a competency, the politician who labours to be great, the nobleman who projects a magnificent building or lays out an elegant garden, every man acting ſuitably and becomingly in his ſtation, contributes ſomething towards the encouragement of induſtry, the preſervation of order, the benefits of ſociety, the accommodations and conveniencies, the entertainments and pleaſures of life. If our general plan be well formed upon the ſolid bottom of reaſon and judgement, we may follow the impulſe of inclination in executing the ſeveral parts; for we ſhall be doing benefit to others at the ſeaſons when we have them leaſt in our thoughts.

7. But if we have a fund of genuine Charity in our boſoms, it will reſtrain our other inclinations from doing any thing contrary to it; for we are to remember that our ſervices are primarily due to all our fellow-creatures alike, as being ſuch; and if we may make a difference, it is becauſe ſome ſtand near within our reach, or becauſe we can have the aid of ſome habitual

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impulſe which enables us to act more vigorouſly in their behalf, than for any others. Therefore we muſt obſerve a juſtice and equitableneſs in our dealings with all, giving them their due ſhare of our attention, which we may do notwithſtanding our particular connections: for the Law is equable to all, its protection extends alike to the nobleman and the cottager; yet the law admits great inequalities of power and property, becauſe neceſſary for the maintenance of order and government that it ſhould do ſo. In like manner Charity will incline us to exact juſtice and equity, but not equality in our conduct; becauſe it is for the benefit of the whole that we ſhould appropriate our ſervices more particular to ſome than to the reſt.

This then being the rule whereby to try the rectitude of our private affections and allowableneſs of our ſchemes, if we have the virtue now under conſideration, it will keep us from all immoderate fondneſs, unreaſonable partialities, and party attachments, and from fixing our hearts upon any purſuit of profit or pleaſure, without reflecting whether the conſequences may not prove more detrimental than advantageous. For though, as I ſaid before, we ſhall move moſt briſkly in the proſecution of our ſchemes by carrying our eye along the line of inclination; yet in the firſt laying them, and in proper ſeaſons of examining them afterwards, we

we ought always to take the general good into conſideration. But then it will be neceſſary to conſider the general good in all its branches, not confining our thoughts to any one, overlooking all the reſt: for the requiſites to happineſs are many and various, and it behoves us to contribute towards it in the way that lies open to our paſſage.

When we ſpeak of the public good we commonly underſtand thereby, an encreaſe of wealth and plenty, or territory or national ſtrength; and the mention of a man's private intereſts ordinarily conveys the idea of ſomething relative to his fortune or preferment: but though theſe be advantages deſerving our aſſiſtance, yet externals alone will not produce happineſs. To introduce it among a people there muſt be liberty, good order, and internal polity, uſeful arts and ſciences, a ſociable helpful diſpoſition exempt from contentious, revengeful and encroaching humours: and to make the condition of ſingle perſons compleat, we may remember there are two other requiſites beſides competence, to wit, health and peace of mind. Therefore it is our buſineſs to ſurvey our powers, opportunities and inclinations, and apply them where they may be moſt ſerviceable; aiming at things feaſible rather than ſpecious in theory, and joining in any good work begun by others; for ſo we ſhall do more benefit than by acting ſingly. So far as our influence

influence extends to the actions of other perſons, we are to regard the improvement of their abilities, as well as their diſpoſition to apply them: for great abilities, with a very faint deſire to ſerve, will do more good in the world than a glowing heartineſs without any power to render it effectual.

Not but that it were a deſirable thing to inſpire all men with the ſame largeneſs of heart and genuine Charity we wiſh to attain ourſelves, and we ought to endeavour it with as many as we can; but to make it general is impracticable. A great part of mankind are obliged by their ſituation to attend ſolely to making proviſion for their own neceſſities, and multitudes have taken up ſome fond paſſion or fancy for their ruling principle of action, which they will not lay down: to think of moving them by any other ſpring, is a vain imagination: but if the ſpring they move by can be turned to work ſome good purpoſe, it is an advantage well worth our attempt to gain. For the advancement of happineſs among our fellow creatures is our proper aim, and if we can procure any thing to be done towards it, though undeſignedly by the doer, it is better than not to be done at all.

Therefore we ought to contrive, ſo far as the little ſphere of our activity reaches, to turn the wants and paſſions and even the follies and vices of men to ſome profitable uſe: for policy and honeſt

honeſt artifice are laudable in a righteous cauſe. Whatever really improves the public weal, without wounding it in ſome other part by ill example or weakening the influence of ſome ſalutary rule, ſerves to be proſecuted by ſuch methods as are feaſible: for in this caſe the end ſanctifies the means. But then we muſt take care to be very ſure that our end is honeſt, and really the ſame we apprehend it to be: for there are frequent miſtakes upon this point. Nothing is more common than for men to cover their proceedings with a pretence of public good, or the ſervice of their neighbour, when in fact they are actuated by ſome private intereſt or fancy, though they do not know it: for the heart of man often deceives itſelf, nor can we always diſcern our true motives of action, or diſtinguiſh them from argument occurring in juſtification of the deed. Therefore it is a dangerous thing to make free with rules or uſe artifice, until we have maturely weighed all the circumſtances of the caſe, and can aſſuredly know the principle whereon we proceed.

8. Nor is there leſs difficulty in diſtinguiſhing Charity from weakneſs than from private views and ſecret propenſities: there is a ſoftneſs of temper, uſually ſtiled good nature, which renders a man incapable of ſaying no to any thing; this is as diſtant from Charity as fondneſs is from Love. I have obſerved in a former place, that he who can never refuſe a favour,

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can hardly be ſaid ever to do one: for it is wreſted from him, not granted: he is driven by the trouble of a refuſal, not prompted voluntarily to what he does. I am far from perſuading any body to turn a deaf ear againſt entreaties, or to remain inſenſible of the wants and deſires of other people: but the deciſion ought always to be made by his own judgement, and what he does ſhould be his own free act, not a compulſion upon him by dint of importunity, moving geſtures, earneſt and pathetic expreſſions: he may laudably ſympathize with the requeſter ſo far as to make his deſires his own, but let him remember that his own deſires ought to lie under the controul of calm and ſober reaſon. But genuine Charity is ever rational and ſteady, and though ſhe will employ the paſſions as her ſervants to do her work more effectually, ſhe will never ſuffer them to become her maſters, nor dictate to her what work ſhe ſhall do.

And though ſhe ſeeketh not her own, yet will ſhe guard her own againſt unjuſt invaſions, as knowing it to be a part of the common ſtock, which it is her principal aim to ſupport. There is a ſelfiſhneſs in mankind which makes them eager to employ and encroach upon others, wherever they can, in proſecution of their own intereſts or fond fancies, without regard to what hazard or inconvenience they put another to by ſo doing: as this temper tends greatly to the

the diminution of happineſs among the whole, whatever reſiſts and diſcourages it, muſt tend as greatly to the general advantage. Therefore the preſervation of our juſt rights and reſolute purſuit of our reaſonable claims, in oppoſition to ſuch as would obſtruct us, is ſo far from being an abatement of our Charity, that it aſſiſts in overthrowing her greateſt enemy: and what degree of ſturdineſs we can acquire, to maintain the determinations of our impartial judgement, will enable us to act more ſteadily and vigorouſly in her ſervice.

Beſides that it is the property of Charity to multiply herſelf among as many as ſhe can, therefore if we reduce her to ſuch a ſickly ſtate as muſt retard her growth, and deter others from admitting her to ſtrike root in themſelves, we ſhall prove but ill friends either to her intereſts, or thoſe of the world we live in. Thoſe good people who by a milkineſs and too eaſy pliancy or ſcrupulous tenderneſs of temper, judge partially againſt themſelves and lie open to be abuſed and impoſed upon by every body, bring a diſcredit upon the virtue; making it be looked upon as a folly which one ſhould be aſhamed to give into, and furniſh an argument to the ſelfiſh to juſtify their practices. How efficacious ſoever their honeſt ſincerity may prove to obtain reward for themſelves, they ſerve only themſelves therein; nor perceive that they act uncharitably by preventing, as far as

in them lies, the like diſpoſition, and benefits redounding therefrom from becoming more general.

And the like conſideration might keep us from affecting an auſterity and ſtrictneſs of virtue, which would give it a forbidding aſpect: if we have any valuable quality belonging to us, we ought to ſpread it as wide as poſſible by rendering it amiable and inviting: but when it appears gloomy, laborious, and irkſome in the poſſeſſor, nobody will be tempted to wiſh a ſhare in the poſſeſſion with him; therefore he ought to ſtudy eaſe and chearfulneſs in his motions, to excite a willingneſs in others to follow his example.

There is likewiſe a ſpice of vanity that often mingles in the exerciſes of virtue; men are deſirous of over-topping others, and would raiſe an admiration by ſoaring to heights that nobody elſe can come near: this attempt the world will look upon as an inſult, and ſet themſelves againſt the man who makes it, and his practices, running down both inſtead of ſtriving to copy them. Therefore if he were able, ſtill it would be highly impolitic and uncharitable, to exhibit ſuch an object of admiration as ſhould drive another into deſpair of ever attaining the like: his ſtudy ought rather to be how to ſhow virtue practicable, and ſet an example that may invite and encourage others to follow it; accommodating himſelf to their occaſions,

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and becoming all things to all men, if by any means he may gain ſome. For the charitable man is not content to go to heaven alone, while there remains any thing in his power that might draw other travellers to join him company in the journey.

9. Charity in former times was placed ſolely in giving money to the poor, or to what was called pious uſes: but this was an artifice of the Popiſh clergy, who turned Religion into a trade, and endeavoured to engroſs all the property of the world to themſelves under the notion of purchaſing heaven by paying it into their hands. Relief of the diſtreſſed when prompted by a ſentiment of humanity, is certainly an inſtance of Charity, but to confine the virtue to this ſingle exerciſe of it, is a groſs abuſe of the word; for it extends to all kinds of good offices within our power, and all objects within our reach, to the world, to our friends, to the rich as well as the poor, to the conveniencies and enjoyments as well as the neceſſities of life, to the advancement of happineſs as well as the alleviation of miſery: therefore if we ſuffer the poor to engroſs more than their ſhare of our attention, we do an injury to others who were entitled to a part of it.

I ſhall not undertake to aſcertain the exact meaſure to be obſerved upon this article, which is beſt left to every man's diſcretion: let him only pay an equal regard to all the duties of

his ſtation, and they will keep one another in juſt balance. But as the matter has ſometimes been managed, alms-giving is ſo far from being the whole of Charity, that it is no exerciſe of it at all; and for the poſſibility of its being none, we have the authority of Saint Paul, who tells us a man may give all his goods to feed the poor and yet not have Charity: we cannot ſuppoſe the man here ſpecified to give away all his goods upon temporal views, but if he does it out of ſuperſtition, or for fear of being rejected at the laſt day, whether the action be right or no, ſtill it does not proceed from a charitable diſpoſition.

The ſtrict obligation to charitableneſs, the dreadful conſequences of a contrary temper with reſpect to our future intereſts, and the crying injuſtice of detaining from God that part of his gifts which he demands by his ſubſtitutes, the poor, are ſo perpetually inſiſted upon, that it affrights men into a compliance without any voluntary diſpoſition of their own. This changes the nature of their Charity, turning it into a traffic with heaven: they do not give, but pay as a debt, or buy off a puniſhment, and at beſt think to purchaſe a ſeat among the bleſſed. Theſe inducements are proper and neceſſary to be urged for bringing men to learn a habit of Charity who had no ſpice of it in their character before; for we have ſeen in the former part of this Chapter that it grows moſt vigorouſly

vigorouſly out of ſelf-intereſt; but when once perfectly formed, it can produce its genuine fruits better without them. It is ſaid, the Lord loveth a chearful giver, but no man can move chearfully that acts out of fear or obligation: it is compulſion and neceſſity, not choice and inclination that guides him.

And here it may be remarked in honour of the preſent age, and as a proof of the improvement rather than degeneracy of the times, that the world is actuated by purer motives than their forefathers: formerly people thought they muſt lay apart a certain portion of their ſubſtance, which they gave to the prieſt; or got rid of in any manner careleſly, no matter how it was diſpoſed of ſo it paſſed out of their hands, it was a draught upon Saint Peter which he was obliged to anſwer: ſo they gave to others only to ſerve themſelves and get a remittance of caſh into the other world for their neceſſary occaſions there. But now mankind are careful to make a judicious application of their benefactions, they form into little bodies, they meet, contrive and conſult together how to beſtow them for the beſt: and this they can do upon a ſentiment of humanity for their fellow-creatures, without being driven by terrors, without thinking of themſelves or their future intereſts; and if a pleaſing reflection occurs afterwards, it is a ſpontaneous thought, an unexpected reward, not had in contemplation at

the time of their earning it. They may eſteem what they do a duty, may believe the total omiſſion of it a dangerous offence, and the due performance meritorious; but theſe are motives lying dormant in the box, ready to fall with their weight into the ſcale when needful, yet never having an opportunity of entering it, becauſe genuine benevolence is before hand with them, operating to action without giving time to any other conſideration to preſent itſelf.

Where there is ſuch a principle ſubſiſting in the mind, it will aſcertain the meaſure of its own exertions without other guidance. People who are made charitable by the obligation thereto, never know when they have done enough, they are perpetually ſcrupulous of applying any thing to their own innocent pleaſures, or even conveniencies, or compliance with cuſtoms, leſt it ſhould be a taking from the juſt rights of the poor: whereas if they have contracted a real appetite for works of humanity, it will prompt ſufficiently of its own accord, it will ſometimes carry them through ſelf-denials unreluctantly upon proper occaſions, it will ſettle its own boundaries among their other virtuous habits, and mark out its province better than can be done by rules and precepts; as our appetites of hunger and thirſt, when not vitiated by nauſeas or unnatural cravings,

ings, direct us to the proper quantity in our meals better than any ſcales or meaſures.

Thus it is our buſineſs to acquire an openneſs and benevolence of temper, which will prompt, not to one branch of our duty only, but to all kind of good offices within our reach. Nor need we be diſturbed at the ſmallneſs of our abilities, nor expect always to perform great ſervices: our powers and opportunities are of the appointment of Providence, who beſt knows what portion of them is fitting for us; we can only uſe our induſtry to improve and apply them, and our induſtry will be proportionable to the vigour of the principle whereby it is actuated. Therefore it is a work of Charity to be nouriſhing a ſentiment of it in our hearts, though there ſhould be no preſent opportunity of making it beneficial to any, nor room for exerting it otherwiſe than by wiſhing well and rejoicing in the proſperities of others: for though nobody is the better merely for good wiſhes or ſympathiying in their good fortune, yet theſe things tend remotely to the general profit by ſtoring us with a principle that will quicken our induſtry, and turn whatever abilities are given us to the beſt advantage they are capable of, and by helping to ſpread the like principle among thoſe we converſe with.

The ſlighteſt good offices have their importance, as they inure the mind to a readineſs in

performing greater works: even expreſſions of kindneſs contribute ſomething towards encreaſing it, when they are not empty form nor overſtrained, but iſſue ſpontaneouſly from a real ſentiment of the mind. Politeneſs is the ſkin of virtue, but our ſkin is a part of us, and ſerves to protect and warm the fleſh. And though it be ſometimes employed as a covering to vanity and malice, for many people are polite to ſhow their own breeding, not to pleaſe the company, and it is ſaid, the Spaniard often kiſſes the hands he wiſhes were cut off, yet the abuſe of it does not prove it to be of no uſe: for tranſlation will bring that to be heartineſs, which was at firſt no more than a compliance with faſhion, and the moſt civilized nations are obſerved to be the moſt humane.

But the benevolent man will have a ſolid ſubſtance under his fair outſide, which will not be a covering put on, but growing from the fleſh, he will think little of his own credit in his civilities, nor affect to ſhine foremoſt in the beau monde: his hearty deſire to pleaſe will be the ſpring of his action, and he will only take direction from the forms of the world how to expreſs his ſentiments moſt intelligibly, and exhibit an object moſt agreeable to the beholder. He will delight to ſee ſervices done and pleaſure given, though he had no hand in contributing towards them, will be capable of enjoying the enjoyments of others, and ſmiling

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at lucky accidents wherever they befal. Even in his ſolitary moments he will not be unſociable, and if he can contrive nothing that may prove beneficial, his thoughts will run ſpontaneouſly in contemplating the manifold bleſſings of life; how the diſtreſſed have their comforts, the groſs and ſtupid their gratifications, the various conditions and taſtes of mankind their reſpective conveniencies and accommodations, and what a copious ſtream of bounty pours down from above upon all corners of the earth.

Nor will his mental eye forbear to ſtretch ſometimes to the inviſible regions abounding with hoſts of congenial Spirits united in one common intereſt with the inhabitants of earth, and knowing that one Lord was the contriver and governor of both worlds, he will ſtand perſuaded that the plan of Providence here, bears a reference to that eſtabliſhed above, and the occurrencies and tranſactions paſſing among us ſerve for ſome purpoſes of ſuperior Beings. This will make room for a pleaſing reflection, that the effects of his induſtry may extend farther than he can trace them; and while he works for the benefit, or even innocent amuſement of himſelf and fellow-creatures within his notice, he may be doing a ſervice or pleaſure unknowingly, to many others far beyond his ken. And it will be ſome conſolation in the evils he undergoes, or ſees befalling around him,

him, to think they are not wholly unprofitable, but if human nature were better without them, yet are they conducive in ſome manner to the happineſs of other natures, in a much higher degree than they take from that of the ſufferers.

Nor can his complacence in good, wherever beheld, ſuffer him to overlook the loweſt part of the creation, but he will find a ſenſible ſatisfaction in ſurveying the various conveniencies and accommodations provided for the brutes, their feedings and reſting places, their gratifications of appetite, their paſtimes and wanton gambols, which to them afford a ſincere and ſuitable enjoyment: and will lend a candid and willing ear to any probabilities that can be offered of their having a larger portion of exiſtence than vulgarly thought of. For even ſuppoſing it could be proved, that they have an individuality and unperiſhableneſs together with the two primary properties of perceptivity and activity, and are diſcerptions too from the general fund of ſpiritual ſubſtance, only impriſoned in cloſer walls and a little deeper diſguiſed than ourſelves, and entitled by the divine Equity to a compenſation for the very unequal treatment had among them here; what hurt would the diſcovery do to us? wherein would it endamage or endanger our future intereſts? what religious ſentiment or moral ſenſe would it weaken in us? Shall our eye then be evil be-

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cauſe God is good and equitable to the leaſt favoured of his creatures? or are the treaſures of his bounty, think we ſo ſcanty as that we muſt grudge every portion of it beſtowed elſewhere, leſt there ſhould not be left enough for us? It is vanity alone that makes us averſe to every favourable ſuppoſition extended beyond our own claſs: we are not ſatisfied with having the care of Providence over us and the hopes of heaven opened to us, unleſs we may engroſs them ſolely to ourſelves: we want to be lords of the creation, to look down with contempt upon all our inferiors, and think it a diſparagement that they ſhould be capable of ever riſing to our own level.

But genuine Charity rejoices in every extenſion of happineſs wherever it can be found or imagined; and had we a competent ſhare of this principle, to caſt into the oppoſite ſcale for counterpoizing the weight of vanity, a little reflection on the unlimited goodneſs of God might quickly turn the balance in favour of our younger brethren in animal life. And if we think it inconceivable that ſuch an abject condition as theirs, can be the prelude to a more exalted ſtate, let us look back upon ourſelves, who we expect ſhall one day be made Iſangelous, equal to the Angels: when we lay ſleeping, ſqualling and ſpewing, in the cradle, how much more ſenſe and intelligence had we than a puppy? when growing and moulding in the womb,

womb, what were we better than a worm? how many thouſands of our ſpecies paſs into the other world directly from thoſe abject ſtates of ſenſeleſs helpleſs infancy, no greater in dignity than the puppy and the worm?

But ſince it is both faſhionable and orthodox to believe death an annihilation to the brutes, and that they were created ſolely for our uſes without the leaſt regard to any benefit their exiſtence might be of to them, I ſhall not preſume to gainſay, for fear of drawing upon me from all ſides thoſe two terrible weapons, Ridicule and Exclamation, which cut down an opponent at once without leaving him any power of reſiſtence. Yet am I permitted by general conſent to allow them ſenſe and feeling, and this is enough to bring them within the verge of Charity; whoſe extenſive compaſs takes in every thing ſtanding in a capacity to receive good and evil; whoſe influence will withhold us from all wanton cruelties, from hardening into an utter inſenſibility of their complaints, or putting them to unneceſſary pains or hardſhips; and diſpoſe us to take pleaſure in doing any thing to render their lives more comfortable, that does not draw us off from our duties to other creatures ſtanding in a nearer relation to us.

Nay could we be ſure they were but Carteſian machines, inſenſible of pleaſure or pain, ſtill it would be prudent to keep the meaſures

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of humanity with them for our own ſakes: for the habit of Charity may be weakened by acts which do no miſchief to the ſubjects whereon performed. When Fulvia ſtuck pins into the tongue of Cicero after his head was brought her by the executioner, it was regarded as a flagrant inſtance of revenge and barbarity, though the lifeleſs member could receive no hurt from her: and by mangling dead bodies, men may bring themſelves into a ſavage unfeeling temper that will make them dangerous to the living; much more by the practice of cruelty upon creatures that have at leaſt the appearance of ſuffering thereby. Solomon ſays the merciful man is merciful to his beaſt; which implies that by being unmerciful to the beaſt he will become ſo to his own kind: for it is our diſpoſition of mind that governs us in our dealings with both, nor is it poſſible for a man utterly to caſt off all tenderneſs and humanity to the inferior animals, without contracting a calouſneſs and obduracy that will cover him from any impreſſions by the diſtreſſes of his own ſpecies.

11. But it will be ſaid there is a neceſſity to ſlaughter the animals for our food and other uſes, to deſtroy vermin that would annoy us, to employ the beaſts in ſevere drudgeries in our ſervices and make them aſſiſt in the works of human induſtry; to bring vice and wickedneſs in our own ſpecies to puniſhment, to return a proper

proper treatment upon injuries, to hurt and diſappoint another in defence of our perſons and properties againſt attacks and impoſitions, to oppoſe, contend and ſtruggle with competitors, to make our beſt advantages in driving bargains, to annoy the enemies of our country, grieve at their proſperities, and rejoice in whatever befals to their detriment; to eſpouſe the cauſe of our friends, relations or coparceners in one common intereſt in prejudice of ſtrangers, to make a difference in our treatment of perſons according to their capacity to do us good or evil, and according to their ranks, accompliſhments and poſſeſſions, rather than their integrity and virtue; to fix our whole attention often upon our own wants and concerns without thought of what will enſue therefrom to any body elſe, to exact painful ſervices and rigorous diſcipline, to hearden our hearts againſt diſtreſſes, cries and importunities; and when in pain or under preſſing uneaſineſs, we cannot raiſe a thought of any thing elſe: all this might make it ſeem that univerſal Charity, and equability of diſpoſition reſulting therefrom, were impracticable, repugnant to human nature, and the circumſtances of ſituation wherein Providence has placed us.

But we ſhould conſider that Charity may be had without caſting away all other motives beſide, for human nature will move by many ſprings, each whereof may lie unimpaired and vigorous,

vigorous, though not always in actual exercise: and if their workings are repugnant and obstructing to each other, it is for want of good management which might bring them to act in concert together, and make their motions mutually dependent. For men are apt to take their rules of conduct for so many detached aims to be pursued severally in their turns; they apprehend that they must be charitable sometimes and to a certain degree, but too much of it, or to act constantly under its influence, would be pernicious and foolish; they conceive it to stand opposite to Prudence and have its separate province distinct therefrom; which must necessarily lessen it in their liking, and put them under difficulties what proportion of their cares to employ upon either, so as to give one its just due without encroaching upon the other.

But it is the business of Philosophy and Religion to reduce our rules into one regular system, one compact body, all the members whereof mutually support and assist each other; to hang the whole law and the prophets, our particular attachments and prudential measures, upon Charity, or the desire of advancing the general good, and not barely to reconcile it therewith, but to deduce our other occasional pursuits therefrom. But what renders this difficult to compass, is, that men have the same mistaken narrow notions of Charity, as they

they have of happineſs: they apprehend happineſs to lie in the gratification of every preſent deſire without regard to the unhappy conſequences that may enſue at another time; in like manner they apprehend Charity to reſpect only the object at preſent before them, without conſidering the general intereſt. Whereas the road to pleaſure ſometimes lies through labour, pain, and ſelf-denial, we muſt often fly from it in order to obtain it, and that conduct is moſt beneficial which will produce the greateſt amount of gratification upon the whole. So Charity is diſtinct from natural affection; the latter in its nature muſt make a difference of perſons and ſtand confined to particular objects, the other is univerſal and equal to all: and though it will encourage the cultivation of private propenſities becauſe of their tendency to the general good, yet ſometimes it directs the other way, becauſe the road to the general good lies through the damage and diſappointment of particulars: ſo that we muſt ſometimes ſeem, to turn our backs upon goodneſs in order to purſue it effectually; and whenever compaſſion, compliance and tenderneſs, would do miſchief to more than they profit, it is Charity to break through them.

Now let us conſider whether, if no uſes were to be made of animals, the condition of men and animals taken jointly, would not be endamaged thereby; and whether their being made

made neceſſary to our accommodation, is not a direction and warrant from God, whoſe Charity is pure, unreſerved and equitable to all his creatures, to apply them to our neceſſities; confirmed therein by his example who has taught them by the conſtitution of their nature, to deſtroy and prey upon one another; and whatever is done under his warrant and direction, we may reſt aſſured is agreeable to goodneſs and equity, though we ſhould not be able to diſcern the conſiſtence.

Let us conſider whether, if vice and wickedneſs were to paſs unpuniſhed, it muſt not abound more among mankind, to the deſtruction of order and ſociety, to the unſupportable detriment of the honeſt, and ruin of the innocent, who might be involved in the contagion: whether if the like treatment were given to all kinds of behaviour, the like reſpect ſhown to the cobler as to the nobleman, to the weak as to the powerful; if there were no contention nor competitorſhip, no attachments of each party to their private intereſt in making contracts, no zeal for the proſperity of our country, no partiality to little ſocieties and partnerſhips, no exacting of labour and diſcipline from the idle and refractory, no application of our whole thoughts to our own wants and diſtreſſes upon preſſing occaſions; whether the buſineſs of the world would go on better, the conveniencies and pleaſures of life become more plenty, or

the evils of it fewer. Hence it appears that in all allowable acts of oppoſition and ſelfiſhneſs, we are doing the work of Charity, contributing to the general good: and if we keep this reflection in mind, the practice of them will never abate our ſentiment of univerſal good will, which will remain vigorous to withhold us from exerciſing them whenever they appear manifeſtly tending to greater miſchief than profit, or are not ſupported by ſome rule that we may truſt was founded upon expedience.

The like reflection will preſerve us from all revenge, animoſity, contempt, inſult, and delight in vexing or diſappointing, nor ſuffer us ever to terminate our proſpect upon the hurt or diſpleaſure of another, but retain always in view the neceſſity or indiſpenſable rule obliging us to do it: will bring us nearer to a reſemblance of our heavenly Father, who remembereth mercy in the midſt of judgement, and never executes judgement but as a means to effect the purpoſes of goodneſs: will make us juſt in our dealings, candid in our interpretations, willing to juſtify thoſe who oppoſe us, deſirous to find excuſes for every conduct, equitable to all, giving the leaſt deſerving their due, capable of contending without anger, and oppoſing without ill-will, retaining a love even for enemies and perſecutors, ſo far as to endeavour and wiſh them well in all particulars conſiſtent with the intereſt of our country, or our own ſelf-defence: and

in general will place the vexations and diſappointments of others in the ſame light with our own labours and troubles, which we ſometimes undergo chearfully upon prudential motives or neceſſity, never upon choice or inclination, but ſhould always be better pleaſed if we could effect our purpoſe without them.

12. And here I cannot help once more congratulating mankind upon the progreſs they have made in both branches of Charity, the inclination to good and averſion to evil, beyond that of former times; as they proceed upon more judicious and purer ſentiments in their relief of thoſe who want it, ſo are they more reaſonable and humane in their contentions. Wars are waged without hatred, battles fought without rancour and barbarity, laws of war eſtabliſhed by general agreement, and meaſures kept between the greateſt enemies: the eſtates of the conquered are not taken from them, nor their perſons made ſlaves, nor ſlaughter and extirpation practiſed in cool blood. 'Our military men behave as intrepid in the day of danger as thoſe of Alexander or Ceſar, but when the heat of ſkirmiſh is over, they treat their priſoners with humanity and the tenderneſs of a friend; and in ſuch intercourſes as the ſervice will permit, they can ſhew a juſt eſteem and civility to perſons of the adverſe party, as readily as to their compatriots.

Our Religion has gotten rid of that cenſoriouſneſs, rigour, and exulting at the damnation of reprobates, which were once eſteemed characteriſtics of godlineſs: but theſe corruptions are now almoſt wholly drained off upon the Methodiſts. Men can purſue their own advantages without wiſhing to diſtreſs others, conteſt without quarrelling, maintain their cauſe without acrimony, and defend their rights without anger.

Even party zeal does not run the ſame miſchievous lengths as heretofore, it does not break out in tumults to plunder and fire houſes, nor produce proſcriptions as in the times of Sylla and the Triumvirate, nor aſſaſſinations like thoſe of Milo and the eve of St Bartholomew, nor make an entertainment of malice by drinking to the confuſion of others: it makes its laſt retreat in calumny, defamation and ſcurrility in abuſive poems miſcalled Satires, for the object of true Satire is vice and folly not particular perſons, and weekly or occaſional ſquirtings of the preſs, which are greedily ſwallowed by the ſhop-keeper, the mechanic, and the mob, or ſome few gentlemen who have nothing of the gentleman beſide their dreſs and equipage, belonging to them, nor have yet thrown aſide the rudeneſs of the ſchoolboy, and what ill humours they contracted when children from the kitchen.

But

But it is to be preſumed the leaders, however they may ſometimes encourage theſe virulences to ſerve a turn, do not enter into the ſame ſentiments themſelves: for they know that ſtruggles for power are fair between contending parties, and have no reaſon to be angry with their competitors for gaining an advantage over them, as being conſcious that they ſhould have done the like themſelves, could they have found the means of effecting it. And this conſideration in an equitable temper, making all allowances for another that one would deſire for oneſelf, may extend ſo far as utterly to take away reſentment and deteſtation in all caſes whatever: for there is no intrinſic difference diſcoverable in the perſon or ſpiritual ſubſtance of men, the difference lies in the body or mental organization, according as they were moulded by natural conſtitution, education, example, company, or circumſtances ſurrounding them. Therefore when we feel our anger riſe at any thing diſpleaſing done by another, we may reflect that we ſhould have done juſt the ſame had we been in all reſpects circumſtanced exactly alike: which will convince us that our treatment of them ought to be guided by a view to expedience and neceſſity, and not by paſſion.

13. There is ſtill another branch of Charity which muſt not be omitted, and that is Charity towards God, different in form and appearance only, but not in effect; for we can exert our

love of God no otherwiſe than by doing kindneſs to his creatures: and both concur jointly to lead us into the ſame courſes of conduct. Our Maker ſtands above the reach of our kindneſs, as being incapable of receiving either benefit or pleaſure from any thing we can do: if he were an hungred, he would not tell us, for the cattle upon a thouſand hills are his; if he wanted the tribute of praiſe and adoration for his entertainment, he need not ſeek it from us, for the bleſſed Spirits in a thouſand heavens await his commands: but we are exhorted to make it the buſineſs of our lives to ſerve and pleaſe him, ſolely becauſe what is called his ſervice will render them moſt valuable to ourſelves and beneficial to one another.

The apprehenſion of doing a ſervice and pleaſure to God is very proper to be entertained in the imagination, Religion indeed cannot well ſubſiſt without it; it is this gives vigour to our religious exerciſes, inſpires a zeal to carry us through our difficult duties, and arms us with reſolution to reſiſt the force of vicious habits under the notion of their being diſtaſteful and odious to him; but it is very dangerous to let ſuch an opinion catch hold on the judgement. For I have endeavoured to make appear in the proper places, that Imagination and Underſtanding are different faculties, the ſame ſet of ideas not being ſuitable to both; and that it is many times expedient to take up perſuaſions occaſionally

nally which do not tally with the convictions of our reaſon. We are but ſenſitivo rational creatures, having in our natures a ſpice of the Angel and of the beaſt; and the food that is moſt wholeſome and nouriſhing to the one, is unfit for the other's digeſtion. In the execution of our reſolves, zeal and ardor and whatever caſt of imagination helps to foment them, will ſtand us moſt in ſtead; but in ſeaſons of deliberation, when we are to lay out our meaſures and examine their grounds, we cannot be too calm and cool: that our conſiderate judgement may check the luxuriancies of zeal, and prevent the temporary perſuaſions neceſſary to ſupport it from growing into ſettled opinions.

For when men once begin to think ſeriouſly that they can do real ſervice or give actual pleaſure or uneaſineſs to God himſelf, they miſtake the eſſence of Religion, placing it wholly in externals; which are but neceſſary expedients to protect and cheriſh the ſubſtance; and becauſe theſe are ſtiled divine ſervices, imagine they cannot practiſe them too much, nor too intently eſteem them meritorious, and that by their aſſiduities they ſhall become prime favourites, perſons of conſequence with God: which muſt naturally tend to generate ſpiritual pride, and incline them to deſpiſe, cenſure and deteſt their fellow-creatures as his enemies, odious and loathſome in his ſight. And it may be obſerved, that thoſe who turn Religion into an

engine of craft and ambition, always begin with inſtilling a notion that God has an intereſt of his own in certain modes of worſhip and profeſſions of belief, and that we can ſerve him therein by reſiſting, diſtreſſing, or deſtroying oppoſers.

But the love of God is another kind of affection from that of our brother; it is not a deſire of profiting or obliging, or when no important ſervice occurs, of making the moments paſs more ſmoothly with him, for there is no matter for ſuch a deſire to work upon: it is rather a filial reſpect and dependence, a looking up to him as our protection and ſource of our happineſs, a taking ſolace in the contemplation of his almighty Power, his Providence and Goodneſs. And that we may not want matter for this ſolace to feed upon, let us reflect from whence all our bleſſings are derived, whoſe air we breathe, whoſe food we eat, whoſe ground we walk upon, whoſe creatures we aſſociate amongſt, whoſe workmanſhip we inhabit, whoſe inſtruments we ſee and hear and ſpeak and act and think with; how many more conveniencies and enjoyments we have than troubles, how much larger grounds of hope than fear for the future, how many pleaſures and comforts abound throughout the viſible world around us, and how good reaſon there is to believe, that whatever ſufferings befal will earn a far greater profit in the long run.

Let

Let us then turn the tables, imagining for a while there were no God, and conſider what our condition muſt be upon that ſuppoſition, how uncertain, how hopeleſs, how diſmal the proſpect: for a proſpect of ſome ſort or other will ruſh upon our thoughts notwithſtanding all the ſophiſtry that can be employed to ſhut it out. Endeavours have been uſed to ſhew that ſenſe and intelligence may reſult from a compoſition of matter very finely organized, becauſe our ſenſation and underſtanding depend upon the condition of our bodily frame, growing and decaying with that, varying from time to time as that varies: but tho' our ſight of objects depends upon the magnitude, form, motion and ſuperficial texture of bodies before us, and various commixtures of rays reflected from thence, and if the light be withdrawn we can have no viſion at all; nevertheleſs all the figures and colours in the world will not produce viſion without an eye to behold them. In like manner though our ideas depend upon the ſtructure and preſent ſtate of our mental organization, yet this only exhibits the objects, nor can ever produce an actual perception without a perceptive ſubſtance within to diſcern them: which ſubſtance cannot be a compound, nor can perceptively reſide unleſs in an individual. Thus we have an individuality which renders us unperiſhable, incapable of annihilation by any law of nature diſſolving our material compoſition:

tion: but what new objects we ſhall have to perceive, what ſmooth or rugged particles we ſhall adhere to, what organizations Chance or Neceſſity ſhall provide for us, remains wholly uncertain: in this lottery, whereon our whole fortune depends, there are millions of blanks to one prize. And even in this life, ſubject to many formidable evils whoſe cauſes we cannot inveſtigate, all will be hazard and caſualty, guided by no order nor regard to our intereſts, nor any rule of apportionment diſtributing them ſeverally where they may be eaſieſt borne: ſo that we have nothing but thoughtleſſneſs and inſenſibility of danger to make us enjoy proſperity ſecurely; and in adverſity nothing to comfort us, nor alleviate the preſſure with a reflection that even troubles are ſent in wiſdom and kindneſs, and will terminate in our profit. Therefore we have reaſon to rejoice that this is not the caſe, that our future fate does not depend upon the chances of a lottery; and if I may be allowed the expreſſion, to think it the luckieſt thing in the world, that there is a benign intelligent Power by whom all the laws of nature and courſes of fortune were eſtabliſhed, and that whatever ſhall become of us when turned out of our preſent lodging, we can never go beyond the reach of his care and juriſdiction.

14. It has been ſaid that God created all things for his Glory, and he is extremely jealous of it: blaſphemy has been always eſteemed the moſt

moſt heinous of crimes, and the higheſt perfection of godlineſs lies in doing all things for his glory. But let us conſider wherein glory conſiſts, not ſolely in might and power, for they are objects of terror and aſtoniſhment as well as of admiration, according to the other qualities joined therewith. It is goodneſs and beneficence that make power glorious, for, becauſe they however fervent, can profit nothing when joined with weakneſs, therefore we admire thoſe abilities which may render them effectual: and though the world has fallen into a cuſtom of admiring greatneſs in itſelf, yet when they find it turned to their own damage, it loſes ground in their eſtimation.

Whatever high acclamations may have been laviſhed upon mighty conquerors, deſtroyers of cities, enſlavers of nations, by ſuch as hoped to ſhare in the ſpoil, or who ſtand out of their reach, or wiſh themſelves able to do the like; thoſe who are plundered and oppreſſed by them never join in the panegyric, they may pay a ſlaviſh homage through fear, but cannot honour them in their hearts. Let us conſider the common opinion of the Devil who is believed a Being of prodigious power and cunning, able if he were not reſtrained from above, to make more havoc and devaſtation than all the Alexanders and Ceſars, the Saracenical Caliphs and Machiavelian Cardinals that ever lived; yet is he the general object of abhorrence and deteſtation,

tion, nor do we find ourſelves inclined to honour him the more for his matchleſs ſtrength and piercing diſcernment: and thoſe Indians who are ſaid to worſhip him, do it that he may not hurt them, not in reverence and admiration of his more than mortal power and ſagacity. Since then God has ſo conſtituted his creatures as that they cannot ſincerely honour him for power alone diſſociated from goodneſs, if he were fond of glory, this would urge him to be gracious that he might receive the ample tribute of praiſe and hearty adoration. But glory regarded as an ultimate end is a ſelfiſh principle, doing good to others only accidentally as a means of procuring gratification to the doer: whereas we cannot imagine any addition of happineſs or pleaſure redounding to the Almighty from the bleſſings he beſtows, therefore his goodneſs is pure, wholly diſintereſted, and the good of the creatures his ultimate point of view in the exerciſes of it.

But he is jealous of his glory becauſe lying in the line with goodneſs, becauſe it is of the utmoſt importance to his creatures, nor can ſuffer diminution without detriment to them. For it has been ſhewn in Chapter XV. that having juſt ſentiments of God is the true ſaving Faith, the coming to the Father, which alone can enſure us a ſolid peace of mind, unite us in the bands of love to one another, make us induſtrious in promoting the general good, and

lead

lead us on the certain road to our future happineſs. Thus Charity towards God and towards Man join to draw us into the ſame courſe of conduct, we do all things for his glory if we do all things for the benefit of one another, and proſecute no under ſchemes but what were laid out upon that plan: and as I have obſerved in the firſt Chapter of this Volume, our duty to him grows out of our duty to our neighbour and ourſelves.

And becauſe the poſſeſſing our imagination with an idea of pleaſing him, and an awful ſenſe of his Majeſty, aſſiſt us greatly in curbing our inordinate deſires, and make us zealous of good works; therefore it behoves us to cultivate thoſe ſentiments in ourſelves and propagate them among others. But to make thoſe ſentiments effectual to anſwer their purpoſe, we muſt not omit either of the foundations which are the ſupport of glory: to celebrate him in our hymns, the Lord great and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, who only doeth wondrous things will not ſuffice, unleſs we likewiſe proclaim him the Lord good and gracious, whoſe mercy is over all his works, who hateth iniquity becauſe it is miſchievous to his creatures, who taketh vengeance of the ſinner to work his amendment, to ſtop the progreſs and prevent the evil effects of ſin, who abhorreth the wickedneſs not the perſon of the ſinner, and remembereth mercy in the midſt of judgement.

But

But hymns and hallelujahs, how aptly ſoever compoſed both in matter and form, are not an ultimate end: they are only uſeful to beget and ſtrengthen proper ſentiments in the mind: therefore we muſt take care to purſue our religious exerciſes in ſuch manner and meaſure as may not interfere with our duties in active life. We may remember that God has ſaid, I will have obedience and not ſacrifice; and how he declared as matter of reproach againſt the Jews, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: ſo then by doing good to ourſelves and one another, with an occaſional thought of acting agreeably to the Will of God therein, we offer him the moſt acceptable ſacrifice, and beſt promote his glory.

It is agreed, both among divines and philoſophers, that the road to virtue is rugged and thorny, but leads into a delightful country: while in the thorny way, our paſſage muſt be irkſome, the diſpenſations of Providence will ſeem ſevere and hard, and what evidences we can collect of the divine goodneſs will work only a ſpeculative conviction of the underſtanding: but when gotten into the open plain, and having begun to gather the fruits of our toils, we ſhall taſte and ſee that God is good, and our theory will become an intimate perſuaſion of the heart. Therefore if we have any zeal for the divine glory, or deſire of poſſeſſing our minds with the fulleſt ſenſe of it, we ſhall make haſte

haſte to pluck up thoſe fooliſh paſſions and fond deſires, which bear the thorns obſtructing our paſſage and making the way rugged; that we may the ſooner attain this intimate perſuaſion, which will prompt us to give him unfeigned honour, and to love him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength.

But this love cannot be perfect unleſs it produce obedience to that other commandment, which is like unto the former, and inſeparably connected with it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf: for if any man ſay that he love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and if he ſays, he has a zeal for the honour of God, but takes no care to bring others likewiſe to honour him, he deceives himſelf, and thinks only to make a merit with heaven rather than to advance its intereſt: Therefore in his very exerciſes of virtue and piety, he ought to have a regard to his neighbour as well as himſelf, to make his behaviour exemplary as well as good, ſo to ſuit his plan to the uſages and conveniencies of life, that virtue may appear practicable, inviting and amiable, to let his light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee his good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven, which they will not do merely for the greatneſs of the works unleſs performed in ſuch manner as they might wiſh to imitate them, and if any meaſures

offer

offer that will certainly tend to the benefit of mankind, to ſuffer no ſcruples to obſtruct him in purſuing them. For honour is greater when given by numbers than by ſingle perſons, and if it were poſſible to procure God to be honoured among multitudes by diſhonouring him ourſelves, it were for his ſervice to do it. Saint Paul wiſhed to become anathema himſelf, ſo he could thereby ſave his brethren the Jews; but this was an impoſſible caſe, put only to expreſs the fervour of his zeal.

For the readieſt way to make others virtuous is to become ſo ourſelves, that we may draw them by example and ſympathy to follow us: on the other hand we cannot purſue the real benefit of our neighbour in any inſtance without ſtrengthening our own Charity, and advancing our own intereſts.

15. The main hindrance obſtructing our progreſs in the love of God ariſes from the narrowneſs of our notions: we are ready enough to love thoſe that are good, but very ſhort and imperfect is our idea of goodneſs, which we conceive to conſiſt in a conſtant indulgence of our deſires. Children are more apt to love ſervants who humour them in every thing, and perſons contributing to their pleaſures, than their parents, how well ſoever convinced of their parental care and judgement: and while we continue ſuch Children as to fix our hearts upon preſent pleaſures, without thought or concern

cern for thoſe at a diſtance, we cannot love God, nor have we any inducement to do it; for he is indeed not good in our ſenſe of the word, being ſevere and inexorable to every deſire that would do us miſchief.

Therefore we muſt learn firſt to change the ſtate of our deſires, inuring them to fix ſtrongly upon diſtant advantage, and muſt ſtrive to enlarge our views ſo as to take in remoteſt conſequences; that we may give every good and evil its juſt weight in our eſtimation, whether nearer or afar off. If we could bring deſire to take this turn, we ſhould find God indulgent thereto, having provided us many means of innocent pleaſure and preſent gratification, but requiring no ſelf-denial from us that does not tend to our greater enjoyment at ſome other time. And though there be evils incident to human life from external cauſes, which we do not ſee the expedience of, yet are there bleſſings and comforts enow to overbalance them: ſo that if we take our view compleatly and fairly, we ſhall ſee ſo many more luminous ſpots than dark ones, as to render the whole an exhilerating proſpect. This is not difficult to be done in a ſituation of eaſe and ſecurity: perſons living in health, plenty and pleaſure, beholding every thing chearful about them, if they ever think of a diſpoſing Providence at all, muſt have a very untoward temper of mind not to acknowledge a goodneſs and bounty therein, notwithſtanding ſome troubles and diſtreſſes in places

whither they never reſort. But when ſevere pains, afflictions and croſſes fall upon ourſelves, the preſſure of them will inevitably contract our proſpect within our own compaſs: it will then be too late to look for marks of goodneſs in any thing that does not contribute to our immediate relief, nor can we form an idea of it unleſs from perſuaſions inculcated ſtrongly in our minds before.

Wherefore it behoves us to provide againſt a rainy day while the Sun ſhines, and in our ſeaſons of proſperity to lay in ſuch a ſtock of perſuaſion as may ſtand us in ſtead in time of trial, ſo intimately rooted in our minds as not to be torn up by the ſtorms of adverſity. It is not enough to join in with the general voice, nor abound in profeſſions of the divine goodneſs, nor ſtifle every thought that would ſuggeſt a doubt: this is only a flattery of God, a covering over the ſore and deceiving ourſelves, nor will afford us comfort when we want it moſt. For perſuaſion is not to be gotten by rote, nor can an inward ſentiment be produced by forced expreſſions, which only give us the credit in our own opinion of believing what we really do not believe: to be hearty and durable it muſt proceed from a full and impartial conviction of our reaſon. This is beſt effected when the underſtanding is clear and the thoughts at eaſe, when we can look around us calmly and make our judgement not ſolely upon the circumſtances of our preſent ſituation: then is our time to ſettle the true

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idea of goodneſs upon ſuch mature and thorough conſideration, as that it may abide without changing colours ever afterwards, to obſerve what marks of it may be gathered from experience, and diſcern its conſiſtence with ſome temporary diſpleaſures.

The exiſtence of evil has been the grand ſtumbling block in all ages; had we fewer bleſſings, but never any thing to croſs or diſturb us, we ſhould be content: let us then conſider the evils as ſo many deductions from the good, and if our ſources of enjoyment be ſo copious as that the balance remaining after theſe deductions be equal in quantity to what would have ſatisfied us if given alone, why cannot we be ſatisfied as well with both taken together? For a number of conveniencies and delights, attended with ſome toil and ſuffering, are deemed more deſirable than a little pleaſure that may be had without any trouble at all: as a large eſtate ſubject to taxes, repairs, cares of management, and vexations by bad tenants, appears preferable in the eye of the world to a ſmall annuity conſtantly paid upon demand.

But we are apt to imagine that Omnipotence might have given us the ſame bleſſings without the mixture of evil appendant thereto, or making it the neceſſary paſſage to them: this for ought we know, might have been done in the original conſtitution of univerſal nature, which was the work of God in his character of

Creator, wherein he ſtands far above the reach of our faculties, nor is it poſſible for us to diſcern what rules or meaſures it was fit for him to be guided by. We ſhall do beſt to take things as they are conſtituted, to contemplate him in his Perſon or Character of Governor, ordering all things in perfect wiſdom, goodneſs and equity, according to their natures and relations eſtabliſhed before from everlaſting, laying out every event in his plan ſo as to yield the greateſt profit to the whole, and providing that each individual ſhall ſhare in the good of the whole. Could we once thoroughly convince ourſelves of theſe points upon rational grounds by the evidences ſuggeſted in former parts of this work, or what others may occur to our obſervation; and could we bring ourſelves to a habit of eſtimating things by the whole line of their conſequences, and learn to value an evil productive of much greater good, though we might ſtill fall deficient in our idea of infinite goodneſs through the imperfection of our conceptions, yet we ſhould have ſenſe and apprehenſion of goodneſs enough to be the object of our cordial dependence and unfeigned adoration.

16. We have ſeen in § 11. how the contentions and competitions, unavoidable in our tranſactions with the world, often tend to abate our Charity to one another: and I have endeavoured to point out the remedy for preventing that effect, by deducing our rules of

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private prudence and ſelf-defence from the general good, and holding that derivation conſtantly in view when we practiſe them; which will ſtill leave us inclination to do as many kind offices to the party oppoſed as are not inconſiſtent therewith. But there is another abatement made by a falſe delicacy we too often contract, which gives us a contempt and loathing of perſons whoſe appearance, taſte and manners are very different from our own. If we diſlike a man's face, if his dreſs be ſhabby, his deportment clowniſh, his language rude, his ideas groſs, or any vicious mixture in his character; we can ſcarce prevail upon ourſelves to wiſh him any thing good, or think him capable of enjoying a real pleaſure, becauſe thoſe he ſeems to delight in are utterly unſuitable to our reliſh.

This turn of mind we are not formed with by nature but drawn into by education as a preſervative againſt catching habits and deſires, that would be unbecoming and miſchievous: for it being natural to imitate what one likes, and avoid what one abhors, we teach our children an averſion to the manners and ſentiments of the vulgar and ignorant, to prevent their being led into the like by their example; and a contempt of the brutes and their ways of living, to take off their attention from ſordid and groveling employments or pleaſures. Thus we are forced to excite an antipathy, to ward off the pernicious effects of ſympathy that might otherwiſe enſue: for young and unexperi-

enced minds cannot eaſily make a diſtinct eſtimation of the perſons and of the practices, nor pick out the good and bad parts in a character, nor diſcern the force of propriety, which renders the ſame things bad in one place that were good and commendable in another.

Therefore this method of dealing with them is prudent and neceſſary, until a better can be taken by gradually ſhowing them the reaſons, relations, and differences of things, together with the rudiments and cautions founded thereupon: which though I apprehend poſſible in theory to be done, and would certainly be preferable, yet cannot be practiſed by the generality of parents and teachers, who muſt be left to go by rule and rote and cuſtom, becauſe they know none other way to go by. Nevertheleſs when we come to ſome maturity of judgement and reflection, we may learn to walk without thoſe go-carts which were neceſſary to ſupport our infant ſteps, to be ſenſible of pleaſures which would be none to us, to ſee the fitneſs of things in other circumſtances of condition, which would be highly pernicious and unbecoming in ours, to weigh the ſeveral ingredients of a character apart, and to diſtinguiſh between the perſon and the ſentiments or practices, ſo as to eſcape the influence of ſympathy from the one, without aid of antipathy to the other.

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For ſurely one may ſee the joy a hog receives by wallowing in the mire, without wiſhing to roll with him oneſelf; or contemplate a multitude of flies friſking about and regaling luxuriouſly upon cow-dung, without either deſiring to partake of the repaſt, or feeling our ſtomachs turn at the filthineſs of their taſte: for thoſe appetites are perfections in their natures which would be depravations in ours, and the materials for gratifying them are valuable bleſſings to them, though they are troubles and annoyances to us. In like manner we may perceive a real enjoyment in the diverſions and coarſe merriment of the vulgar, though we find no reliſh in ourſelves for the like; an expedience in their ſentiments and manners, which would prove hurtful and unſuitable to us. We may admire the robuſtneſs of the porter, the intrepidity and heartineſs of the common ſailor, the hardineſs of a houſebreaker or poacher capable of enduring all weathers unconcernedly without wanting to acquire thoſe qualities by the ſame methods. We may regard vice as a loathſome diſeaſe, deteſtable in itſelf but not exciting a deteſtation of the patient; for whom we may ſtill retain a tenderneſs and what degree of eſteem he deſerves, while we keep him at a diſtance for fear of taking the infection: for in almoſt every character and every form of Being, we may find ſomething well worth our purchaſe if it were to be bought with money,

though we ſhould not be willing to exchange conditions upon the whole.

By ſuch obſervations and reflections we may in time clear ourſelves from the remains of the ſchoolboy, a fierceneſs and ſtrangeneſs of temper, an averſion and contempt of every thing not exactly ſuited to our own ways: which while it laſts muſt make us unequitable, partial in our judgements, incapable of acknowledging any thing good or valuable elſewhere, and conſequently indiſpoſed to give God his glory. For a ſincere and hearty honour can ſpring only from the largeneſs of his bounty; but we ſhall have no ſenſe of any in the greateſt part of the creation appearing wretched and deſpicable in our eye, where the ſcene of happineſs will ſtand confined to a very few of our own acquaintance who happen to hit our taſte, as being perſons of good humour or good breeding, that have ſeen the world and are orthodox.

17. Were men apprized how many good fruits are the natural produce of a thorough Charity, they would be more careful to cultivate it, and ſuffer no delicacy or prejudice of education and cuſtom to ſtint its growth. It would be ſuperfluous to expatiate upon the benefits reſulting from this principle, if it were to prevail in general among mankind: for they muſt occur to any one who will deign to beſtow a thought upon the ſubject: there would be no war, nor injury, nor cozenage, nor contention

tention, nor fear, nor ſuſpicion, nor waſte, nor idleneſs, nor perverſity, nor fond indulgence; unexperienced innocence would find an eaſy inſtruction every where: natural appetite be withholden from warping with a tender gentle hand, and the earth reſtored to her paradiſiacal ſtate. But this is a romantic imagination which we can never expect to ſee verified in fact; or if it were, Charity would then become not a virtue, nor ſcarcely a ſcience: for there is no difficulty in knowing how to behave where every body behaves friendly, and the ſweets of ſuch a conduct all around us muſt raiſe a preſſing appetite and draw us into it whether we will or no.

Therefore our buſineſs in this ſtate of imperfection and trial lies in learning how to preſerve our Charity entire amidſt an uncharitable world, to retain our good will while forced by neceſſity or prudence to act contrary thereto, to accommodate it to the uſages and circumſtances about us, and render it feaſible in practice rather than plauſible in theory. Yet the introduction of an Utopian ſtate may be our aim without being our expectation; and what little approaches we can make in the progreſs towards it, will be an advantage well worth our gaining. For ſo far as mutual good-will and communion of intereſts obtains in any little ſociety, or among a few perſons, it creates a mutual truſt and confidence, relieves them from the neceſſity of guarding againſt encroachments by one another,

enables

enables them, by their joint endeavours, to ſtrike out more lights and procure themſelves more conveniencies and pleaſures, than they could have done ſingly; and anſwers all the ſame purpoſes, though in a far lower degree, as if it were general throughout the ſpecies.

Neither is a ſincere Charity unprofitable to a man's ſelf, though it were to meet with no returns in kind: for it enlarges the underſtanding, purifies the mental eye, and clears the judgement. Moſt of our errors ariſe from a narrow partiality to our own intereſts and humours, we do not ſee things in the ſame light when the caſe is our own as in another's. If my hogs break into my neighbour's corn, it is an accident, and ſuch things ought not to be minded between friends; but if his hogs break into mine, then the caſe is altered, for he ought to have yoked them, and it is but reaſonable that he ſhould pay for his negligence. But to thoſe whom we heartily love, we ſhall heartily wiſh well, and judge as favourably in their caſe as in our own: and if we bore a ſincere good-will to our fellow-creatures as ſuch, we ſhould judge equitably upon them all, regarding ſolely the merits of the cauſe without reſpect to the difference of perſons; and this would teach us an impartiality and calmneſs in matters relating to ourſelves.

It is commonly ſaid that a ſtander-by ſees more of the game than he that plays, becauſe the paſſions of the player are intereſted, which raiſes

raiſes an eagerneſs that blinds his judgement: and for the like reaſon many people can give better advice than they can follow, for our concern for another proceeds from reaſon and good nature, paſſion has no ſhare in it, therefore we can often ſee clearer into his affairs than we can in our own. If we could inure ourſelves to take concern in the evils befalling others, and ſeek for alleviations and comforts with the ſame heartineſs as for ourſelves, we ſhould find them more readily than we could in our own caſe; becauſe we ſhould not have the pungency of the ſmart to confuſe our ideas, and prevent reflection from taking its full and fair ſcope: we might then weigh the value of diſtant good in a juſt balance, ſee its deſirableneſs, and acknowledge a preſent pain eligible that works out a greater advantage: we ſhould be more at leiſure and better qualified to examine what nefits may reſult from a ſuffering, and be able to find a ſpice of comfort even in probabilities.

As the mind is more ready to hope well for thoſe to whom we wiſh well, and quicker in remarking the ſucceſs of perſons in whoſe enjoyments we can ſympathize, we might learn a greater facility in augurating, for the beſt, without that anxiety and dread which ſeizes us upon but juſt poſſible dangers hanging over ourſelves, and ſhould diſcern a much more copious flood of the divine bounty than the ſelfiſh and narrow-minded can ever conceive.

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For we can judge more calmly upon hurts we ſee than thoſe we feel, and in them can acknowledge, that ſince evils muſt fall ſomewhere, it is not harder they ſhould fall where they do, than elſewhere. By practice of this ſort, and the habit of ſympathizing with the good and ill ſucceſſes of others, we may learn to eſtimate for ourſelves from the manner wherein we have been uſed to eſtimate for them; we may be convinced that what was right and equitable for them was the ſame for us, and what was eligible for them was ſo to us: which would prevent our murmuring at being called upon to bear our ſhare of the general burden, would give a lively feeling ſenſe of remote good in the midſt of preſent uneaſineſs, enable us to bear it patiently, help to ſupport us in dangers, and teach us more willingly to undergo the ſame diſcipline and wholeſome ſeverities we have exacted from others in kindneſs and ſincere regard to their benefit.

Perhaps it may be thought that ſome enmity, contention and ſelfiſhneſs is neceſſary in the world, to find us employment and keep our activity alive; for more than half the buſineſs of life lies in guarding againſt the attacks and encroachments of one another: and it is obſervable, that when people come into a ſituation of perfect eaſe and ſecurity, with nothing ever to vex or ruffle them, they quickly ruſt in idleneſs. This may be too true, as mankind is conſtituted, yet does not render it needful

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for a man to nouriſh ill humours in his own breaſt, to make work for himſelf and neighbours; for there will not want employment of that ſort from the unreaſonableneſs of others: be his Charity ever ſo perfect and diffuſive, he will never, with all his endeavours and all the force of example and ſympathy, bring an equitable diſpoſition to prevail ſo generally, but there will ſtill be unruly paſſions and greedineſs enough in the world to keep vigilance awake, and prevent activity from ſtagnating.

Nor need he fear the conſequences, if it were poſſible to make Charity univerſal: the reaſon why it does not ſuffice to fill up our time is becauſe in ſingle perſons at beſt it is imperfect, languid, unenlightened, confined, too feeble to act without aid of ſome other motive, and often degenerates into weakneſs: but were it general, it would become manly, judicious, diſcerning, habitual and vigorous, engaging of itſelf, and expert in finding ways of exerciſing it. For by joining aſſiſtance we might improve one another's lights, far beyond what each of us can do ſingly, ſo as never to be at a loſs how to proceed: and by mutual example and ſympathy, we ſhould ſtrengthen our propenſity to act for the beſt, ſo as never to want an incitement to do what appeared beneficial.

There is induſtry enough in quantity among mankind to anſwer all the purpoſes of life, but the

the greater part is miſemployed in miſchief or thrown away upon trifles; and that earneſtneſs of deſire which gives vigour to it, is generally derived from cuſtom: a ſingle perſon cannot ſo eaſily raiſe a liking by his own efforts as multitudes can draw others after them. Therefore were Charity and fellow feeling to be the prevailing humour in the world, it would become faſhionable and engaging to ride as many miles upon a public ſervice as after a ſtinking fox; to beſtow as much pains and contrivance upon the good and pleaſure of others, as upon raiſing a name, or breeding race horſes, or procuring curioſities, or purſuing our own fantaſtic ſchemes. This would turn induſtry into its proper channel, where it would not overflow to make waſte and do miſchief, nor be loſt among the barren ſands of whimſy; but run all to the uſes of mankind, employed in watering and cleanſing, to quicken the growth of good works, and clear away thoſe obſtructions of fear, impatience, indolence and indulgence, which diſable us from purſuing our real advantages.

Thus whether we conſider mankind in general, or ſocieties, or particular perſons, the virtues mutually aid, ſupport and nouriſh one another: Charity which is built firmeſt upon Faith and Prudence, improves them again in return, opens wider ſcenes of the divine beneficence to enlarge our Hope, encourages Fortitude and Temperance, and inſpires an equitable temper and

and impartial Juſtice to all; it eradicates vanity, clears the judgement, perfects diſcretion, and animates induſtry; it inſures peace of mind with ſelf-ſatisfaction, and makes us find immediate pleaſure in contributing to the general good wherein our own is contained, thus advancing our intereſts effectually without holding them perpetual in contemplation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Our Neighbour.

WHOEVER throws aſide his reaſon, when he takes the Bible in hand, is like to make very little profit thereby: for the written word I conceive, was not deſigned to ſuperſede the uſe of reaſon, but to aſſiſt and put it into the right track for arriving at a ſound judgement upon things of the utmoſt importance. This is particularly manifeſt in that paſſage, where we are inſtructed in the duty of Charity towards our Neighbour: which being propounded as one of the two great commandments whereon hang all the law and the prophets, it was aſked; But who is my Neighbour? Had the mind of the perſon making this queſtion been clear and open, it would have ſuggeſted to him the proper anſwer, Every fellow-creature to whom I ſtand in a capacity of doing a kindneſs;

kindneſs: but it ſeems his judgement had been darkened by ſome narrow prejudices, which to remove was all that was wanted; therefore the right anſwer was not dictated as from the chair of authority, but a caſe put which might naturally lead him to make it for himſelf, A certain man travelling from Jeruſalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who ſtripped him of all he had, and left him naked and wounded upon the road: a prieſt and afterwards a Levite, coming that way, looked on him and paſſed by on the other ſide; but a Samaritan ſeeing his diſtreſs, alighted, poured oil into his wounds, ſet him on his own beaſt, and carried him to the inn, where he provided that all neceſſary care ſhould be taken of him. Which of theſe was Neighbour to him that fell among thieves? He that ſhewed mercy to him. Then go thou and do likewiſe.

Now if we underſtand this parable literally, and confine ourſelves to the direct and primary import of the words, it will teach us that a man becomes neighbour to another by doing him a ſervice, nor ſtands in that relation to any to whom he has never been helpful; and the moral of it will be, that we ought to relieve the diſtreſſed for our own ſakes, in order to become entitled to the offices of a good neighbour from them: an inference which how much it would redound to the honour of the teacher or improvement of the learner, I leave to every man's common ſenſe to determine. But Jeſus knew the

the perſon he had to deal with would put no ſuch conſtruction upon his words; for his natural lights would ſhew him that neighbourhood muſt ariſe from the ſituation whereiu men ſtand with reſpect to one another, not from their manner of conducting themſelves therein; and is correlative, ſo that no man can be neighbour to another without the other being likewiſe neighbour to him. Therefore the wounded traveller, by the circumſtance of his diſtreſs, was really placed in as near a degree of neighbourhood to the prieſt and the Levite as the Samaritan, though the latter only approved himſelf a neighbour by acting agreeably to that character, and was therefore propoſed as a pattern for any who deſire to fulfil the duties of good neighbourhood.

And the caſe of a Jew and a Samaritan was choſen to ſhew the relation the more comprehenſive, for the Samaritans were regarded as ſchiſmatics, they had ſet up mount Gerizzim for the place where God's name was to be worſhipped in oppoſition to Sion, therefore there was as much hatred and deteſtation between them and the Jews, as religious feuds can inſpire. I hope we can find nothing ſimilar in our own times to illuſtrate by, but muſt take our idea from hiſtory, and may imagine their animoſity as great as between a Jeſuit and a Hugonot, a high Churchman and a Presbyterian of the laſt century. If then a Samaritan, a ſchiſmatic, a

fanatical dog, an open enemy to God and his true Church, nevertheleſs be neighbour to an orthodox Jew when in want of each others aſſiſtance, ſurely the ſame relation muſt ſubſiſt between every two human creatures upon earth in the like ſituation.

2. The term neighbour was the propereſt to diſtinguiſh the object of our good offices, becauſe it ariſes from ſituation, not from perſonal character: a brother muſt always continue ſuch wherever he goes, nor is it poſſible for any one who was not born of the ſame parents, to become a brother afterwards; but there is a poſſibility that any perſon however remote, may come to live at the next door. Therefore our Charity muſt be univerſal, our diſpoſition and good will extend alike to all, becauſe elſe there might be ſome who could never come into a ſituation entitling them to receive the effects of it, and we might poſſibly have a neighbour to whom we ſhould owe no duties of good neighbourhood: but our immediate attention and exerciſes of Charity muſt ſtand confined by our opportunities, for where we can do no ſervice, there and there only we owe none, yet we may ſtill retain a good will though without power of rendering it effectual.

And here it will not be foreign to my principal deſign, that of harmonizing Reaſon and Revelation, to obſerve how well this doctrine tallies with that deduced by the light of nature

in

in the two former Volumes, and explained in the firſt Chapter of this, where it appears that we are citizens of the Univerſe, intereſted in all the good and evil befalling therein; therefore our good wiſhes are primarily due to the Whole, and our firſt aim ought to be placed upon advancing the general ſtock of happineſs. But we are too inconſiderable creatures to do any thing for general ſervice: our powers are ſmall, our activity confined by time and place within a very narrow compaſs, which obliges us to contract our aim to points that we can reach. For ſince the good of the whole is made up of the aggregate of good among individuals, we ſhall contribute towards the one by every little addition we can make to the other: from whence it follows, that every perceptive creature as being fellow citizen of the ſame Univerſe, that falls within the ſphere of our good offices, or in Scripture language becomes our neighbour, is the proper object of our endeavours.

But ſmall as our powers are, they may effect more than one perſon, nor is neighbourhood ſo confined as to include none but him that lives at the next door: ſince then we may have ſeveral neighbours at the ſame time, we muſt not be ſo intent upon our duties to one, as to overlook all the reſt. If my neighbour deſires me to join with him in a concert of French horns, were I able I ſhould be willing to oblige him; but if I knew the noiſe will diſturb the whole

ſtreet, it were more neighbourly upon the whole to refuſe him: or if he would project a building over my ground, that muſt prove an annoyance to others, I ſhall be a bad neighbour if I do not oppoſe him.

Neither does our duty to our neighbour exclude all regard to our own intereſt, but puts both upon an equal footing; for we are members of that neighbourhood whoſe intereſts we are to cultivate, parts of that Whole whoſe advantages we are to purſue: we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourſelves, not better than ourſelves, nor ſolely, ſo as to reſerve none for our own uſe. Hence, as obſerved in the Chapter above cited, the general rule parts into two main branches, Prudence and Benevolence, called in ſacred ſtile the wiſdom of the ſerpent and innocence of the dove: the former prompts to hinder another from encroaching upon our ſhare of happineſs, the other withholds us from making encroachments upon his, for an encroachment on either ſide diminiſhes the common ſtock alike. Therefore in our dealings with another, we are to regard his good indifferently with our own, and take the courſe that will yield moſt of it to either; and in our tranſactions affecting ſeveral, we are to purſue thoſe meaſures from whence the greater profit will redound upon the balance among the whole.

3. This

3. This it is which juſtifies all allowable contentions, oppoſitions, puniſhments and ſeverities, and recommends all laudable ſelf-denials: for though theſe things are unneighbourly or unnatural, if we conſider only their preſent effect upon the party ſuffering by them, yet we muſt remember that the public and other perſons, beſides thoſe with whom we have immediate intercourſe, are our neighbours whenever their intereſts will be affected by what we do; and we ourſelves each of us make one of the neighbourhood, which will be advantaged by a trouble or inconvenience brought upon any part of it for the greater benefit of the whole, or of any other part. Yet ſtill the neighbourhood is not diſſolved between us and any whom we find juſt cauſe to afflict, but is overpowered by the ſtronger obligation of doing a greater good to ſome other parts of the neighbourhood; the force of it ſubſiſts entire notwithſtanding the contrary attraction, as the force of gravitation continues to act upon a plummet though you pull upwards with a ſtring, and will draw it down again the moment you let go your hand: ſo that competitors, enemies and perſecutors, do not ceaſe to be our neighbours, but remain entitled to the benefit of that relation at intervals whenever our duty to others who ſtand in as near relation, will permit.

Nor is it neceſſary in every caſe of contention and ſeverity, to have an immediate diſcernment

of the benefits reſulting therefrom: for it may be juſtified by rules prevailing among mankind which carry a preſumption of having been founded upon a neceſſity or expedience we may not be able to diſcern: but then to give them that preſumption, they muſt be rules of judgement and ſobriety not of paſſion or arbitrary cuſtom, and taken upon authority of the diſcreet and intelligent; not of the giddy and the impetuous.

But if a neighbourhood be ſo large as that there can be little intercourſe among them all; it is convenient for the benefit of all to diſtribute into little clans, among whom there may be a cloſer attachment, and more continual commerce of good offices: in forming of which under ſocieties, they will have reſpect to characters, qualifications, old acquaintance, convenience of ſituation and other circumſtances, rendering them more apt to join together for mutual emolument or pleaſure. And if it be proper for ſome one or more of them to take order in matters of general concern, each will give him all the aſſiſtance and deference requiſite for the better performance of his charge.

For we ought never to forget that we are ſenſitivo-rational animals, governed partly by appetite, habit, cuſtom, appearance, and all the family of imagination, and but partly by reaſon: nor can the latter faculty work her purpoſes half ſo effectually as when aided by the other.

Were

Were each man to attach himſelf to the ſervices of a ſtranger, one of different manners and character, whom he had no other inducement to oblige than being a fellow-creature, he could not proceed with the ſame vigour and heartineſs as when prompted by natural affection, inclination, mutual convenience, or general cuſtom, and approbation.

Nor could he join ſo induſtriouſly under thoſe who have the care of public ſervices, upon the ſingle view of their being public ſervices, without a due reſpect for authority and ſenſe of obligation to ſtimulate him. So that there would be fewer benefits done and received among mankind, and good neighbourhood muſt ſuffer, if we were to depend upon reaſon alone and not preſs the inferior powers of our nature into her ſervice: but the inferior powers will not always come upon call, therefore we muſt employ them when they are to be had, and put reaſon upon ſuch work wherein ſhe may have the benefit of their ſervices.

Thus the duties of particular relations, connections and ſtations, grow out of a due regard to good neighbourhood, becauſe it will be beſt promoted by paying a juſt attention to them. Hence it follows that, whenever things are ſo circumſtanced as that the proſecution of thoſe duties would manifeſtly carry us contrary to the general good they are ſuperſeded, and we muſt hate father and mother, wife and children, in

compariſon of that univerſal body whereof we are members: but whenever this caſe does not happen, as it very rarely does happen, every one is our neareſt neighbour in proportion as we ſtand beſt qualified and ſituated, as well with reſpect to our inward diſpoſition and powers, as to common opinions and uſages, to ſerve him moſt effectually and heartily: and when equal benefits come into competition, the nearer neighbour always deſerves preference before the more remote.

4. Therefore it is an unjuſt cavil that has been raiſed againſt the Goſpel by ſome who pretend that it does not inculcate all the moral duties, becauſe it has omitted to give any precepts upon Friendſhip. For we have juſt now ſeen that love to the neighbourhood will incline us to encourage thoſe affections which may give a ſpring to our endeavours in acts of kindneſs, and the more ties wherewith we are obligated to any, the nearer he ſtands in proximity to us: ſo that it is impoſſible for any man, who is truly charitable or a good neighbour, in the Scripture ſenſe of the terms, even to prove a treacherous, an uncertain, or a bad friend, becauſe all ſocial duties are implied and virtually contained in that general precept called the ſecond great commandment. But ſo it may be ſaid likewiſe that he, who fulfils this commandment, cannot poſſibly be a bad husband, or a bad father, or ſon, or maſter, or ſervant, or ſubject,

ſubject, nevertheleſs it was found neceſſary to give particular injunctions for all thoſe ſtations: was it not then an overſight that the duties of friendſhip were omitted?

To this may be anſwered, that other connections are general, taking place among the vulgar, the ignorant, the ſelfiſh, the perverſe, and perſons of all denominations and characters: they are caſt upon us by nature, or entered into for neceſſity or convenience, and men would be tempted continually to violate them if not reſtrained by rules and injunctions. But true friendſhip ſubſiſts only among a few perſons of good character and refined ſentiments, which will direct them ſufficiently how to perform the functions of it: it is a tie of choice, not of nature or ſituation, and the exerciſes of it flow ſpontaneouſly from the reliſh found in them; ſo there is no occaſion to drive him that will lead, for precept and obligation are wholly ſuperfluous in matters whereto the heart is prompted by inclination; they could have none other effect than to make a taſk and burden of that which was a pleaſure before. It is true, a friend ought to ſtand ranked among the neareſt of our neighbours; but this conſideration ſerves only to juſtify our particular attachment to him, and our giving ſcope to the impulſes of friendſhip to take their natural effect upon our actions.

But

But it will be aſked, have there not been fickle unfaithful friends? are they not blemiſhes in ſociety, deſerving a caution and direction to prevent others from following their example? I grant there are frequent miſbehaviours in thoſe common connections and intimacies which the world dignifies with the name of friendſhip: and ſo are there frequent infidelities, diſſimulations and inconſtancies, amongſt lovers; yet I never heard it objected againſt the Goſpel, that there are no rules of duty laid down for our conduct in courtſhip. For affection and paſſion require rules of reſtraint, more than thoſe for keeping up their fervour without abatement: had particular injunctions been given for this purpoſe, they could not have been ſo clearly framed, as not to be perpetually miſunderſtood, and do more hurt in the world than benefit.

What multitudes of novels are ſpread abroad, all aiming to inculcate the indiſpenſable duty of conſtancy? and what effect have they had upon the minds of the boys and girls who ſtudy them? Conſtancy is certainly a virtue and a praiſe; but what is conſtancy in their apprehenſion? nothing but an inflexible obſtinacy of attachment to whatever happens to hit their fancy, againſt all reaſon and prudence and advice. How much more impenetrably would they be armed againſt remonſtrances by the ſanction of Religion, had it been written, And

thou

thou ſhalt be conſtant in love, for this is the third great commandment like unto the two former. But the Goſpel has ſtrongly inculcated the duties of honeſty, ſincerity and fidelity in our dealings, of equitableneſs in our thoughts and words and actions, or practiſing the golden rule to do as we would be done by, to weigh the pleaſures, the rights and advantages, the diſappointments, vexations and damage of others in the ſame balance wherein we would weigh our own: and our own reaſon and common ſenſe, if we conſult them, will inſtruct us how to apply thoſe general rules to particular caſes in love or friendſhip, without overlooking our other duties to the world, to our parents, to our children yet unborn, to our other neighbours, and to ourſelves.

If friendſhip had been made a duty, the world might ſtill have remained liable to groſs miſtakes concerning the thing which is the object of that duty: for where ſhall we find an exact and ſteady definition of friendſhip? the learned have been greatly divided upon this head, ſome having laid down rules for our conduct therein which others have condemned. Nor is this to be wondered at, for indeed there are very various ſorts and degrees of friendſhip, ſo that the ſame rules cannot be applicable to all, but what are proper cautions in one, would be juſtly blameable in another: particularly that

that aſcribed to Bias, which directs us to behave with a friend, as if we knew he would one day become an enemy.

Were there any determinate fixed idea of friendſhip, we might expect to find it in Cicero's treatiſe upon that ſubject, entitled Lælius: but how vague, how deſultory, how fluctuating are his notions! Firſt he tells you, upon the authority of the Philoſophers, that friendſhip can ſubſiſt only among the good, but none is good except the perfect Wiſeman, an ideal character, which never really exiſted upon earth. This he thinks too ſtrict and rigid, therefore by good or wiſe would have ſuch underſtood whoſe lives have been exemplary for fidelity, integrity, equity and generoſity, exempt from all tincture of greedineſs, inordinate deſire, or intemperance of paſſion, uniform and ſteady in their conduct, like Fabricius, Curius and Coruncanius: and explains friendſhip to be nothing elſe than a pefect harmony of ſentiment, as well with reſpect to religious matters as thoſe relating to human life. It is eaſy to ſee into what narrow compaſs this deſcription both of the ſubjects and eſſence of friendſhip, muſt contract it: and accordingly he takes notice that in hiſtory one can ſcarce pick out three or four pair of true friends, to which he hopes in future times Scipio and Lælius will be added for another. Nor can it eſcape our obſervation,

tion, of how little uſe it would be to mankind to enjoin a virtue which can take place in ſo few inſtances, and which perſons of the character above deſcribed will run into of their own accord without direction or exhortation.

Nevertheleſs in other places of the ſame treatiſe he changes his note, repreſenting friendſhip as a common and eaſy thing: ſo common as to be found every where, and ſo eaſy as to be underſtood and admired by every body. For, ſays he, friendſhip is the only thing in human life whoſe value all join with one voice in acknowledging: virtue has been run down by many as mere arrogance and oſtentation, many deſpiſe riches as believing contentment better had with a little; honours which ſet the deſires of ſome in a flame, are by many accounted nothing but bubble and emptineſs, in like manner whatever other things have their reſpective admirers, appear wholly worthleſs in the eyes of multitudes. But upon friendſhip all men unite in the ſame opinion: thoſe who apply their thoughts to public affairs, thoſe who delight in the ſecrets of nature and treaſures of learning, thoſe who attend only to the management of their private concerns, even thoſe who make pleaſure their ſole ſtudy; all agree that there is no living without friendſhip, if one wiſhes to have any enjoyment of life. For friendſhip ſome how finds means to inſinuate itſelf into the characters

characters of all men, nor will ſuffer any ſcheme of life to be carried on without it. Nay if there be any of ſo moroſe and ſavage a temper as to reſemble Timon of Athens the man-hater, yet ſuch a one could not bear to be without a friend, in whoſe boſom he might diſburden his ſpleen.

After this changeable deſcription given by the moſt accurate and eloquent hand, we may gueſs what idea the generality muſt entertain of friendſhip: and indeed if we obſerve the common diſcourſes of mankind, we ſhall find a friend to be one we frequently viſit, who is our boon companion, or joins with us in our pleaſures and diverſions, or encourages us in our buſineſs, or unites in the ſame ſcheme, or votes the ſame way at an election, or is our patron, or dependent, who we hope will help us in riſing to preferment or increaſing our intereſt. Such attachments are apt to grow but too violent of themſelves, making men partial, paſſionate, unjuſt to others who are not their friends, and regardleſs of the commonweal, or of what miſchief they do in their zeal for thoſe they favour, and need curbing rather than encouraging by the ſanction of a lawgiver. Lælius himſelf acknowledges the evils of them, and produces a flagrant inſtance which happened within his own knowledge; for in a court of judicature where he ſat upon the bench, one Bloſius

Bloſius was examined as having been an accomplice with Tiberius Gracchus in ſome ſeditious practices: the man pleaded in juſtification, that he had ſo great a veneration for Gracchus, he thought himſelf bound to do any thing he deſired. What! ſays the judge, if he had bid you fire the Capitol, would you have done it? Yes, replied he, I ſhould have believed it my duty.

Thus we ſee to what lengths of frenzy the duty of fidelity to a friend, preached up inceſſantly among the Romans, could carry a man: but what if Bloſius had been a zealous Chriſtian, and had found it recorded that Jeſus, upon one aſking him, What ſhall I do to be ſaved, had anſwered, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyſelf, thou ſhalt be conſtant in love, and true to thy friend; for theſe are the four great commandments whereon hang all the law and the prophets. This would have brought religious zeal to join in with partiality to his friend, and prepared him to ſuffer martyrdom in the cauſe of party and faction.

But ought we not then to be true to our friend? aſſuredly: common honour and common ſenſe, if we have any, will prompt us to a fidelity, an obligingneſs, a warmth in his intereſts, according to the nature and degree of the friendſhip: but the written word was not

not given to inſtruct us in matters that reaſon can ſo eaſily diſcern by her own lights. Therefore we have cauſe to be thankful that our teacher has been ſilent upon this article, becauſe his authority was not wanted for ſuch as would be diſpoſed to obey it, and would have been perverted to miſchievous purpoſes by the violent and unwary.

End of PART II. VOL. IV.